

# You Have to Be Willing to Understand

by FridayG

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Summary: Ibuki Ryunosuke has been training as hard as he could for years so he could return to Kyoto in hopes of helping the Shinsengumi from the sidelines. Now that he's mastered Old Style Kendo and is one of the best archers in the region, he's ready to go even after hearing he can't learn Tae Kwon Do. However, only a day in Kyoto and the Shinsengumi capture him but don't kill him. Why?

## 1. Chapter 1

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Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki Reimeiroku, any of the Hakuouki series, or any of the characters or Ibuki would have had a part in Hakuouki.

### Chapter 1

-1st Person POV- Ibuki Ryunosuke-

It's been a few years give or take since I was thrown in the river by the Shinsengumi bastards. The last time you saw me, I cut my hair. Unfortunately, it ended up growing back a little bit so now I have to keep it in a messy bun since my hair is too thick to keep neat. I've changed my clothing as to not remember my days with the Shinsengumi but it's still the same style with the exception of the colors.

A maroon-like color and a faded dark pink are my colors now considering no one else uses them. Well, after I got out of that river, I was found by an old man, Tano-san, who made yumi, a special type of bow that is actually very easy to use if you're careful. He taught me how to use it and an old style of kendo while I was recovering and after awhile, I apparently became one of the best archers considering there are so few and hardly anyone can master the yumi as easily as I did.

Not to mention he deemed me on Master Level with Old Style Kendo which no one uses anymore since they thought it required evolution and now it has various styles branched from it. Or so that old man said...he was kind of like a grandfather to me after awhile. Nice man. He had to have been nice if the only thing he made me do in order to stay with him was serve him like I used to serve Serizawa with shoulder rubs and sake since that was all I was good at.

He didn't hit me though so I was fine with it. Anyway, I'm in Edo for Tae Kwon Do training and then I'm going back to Kyoto since I heard there's a giant commotion there and the Shinsengumi are right in the middle of it. I'm planning on going there and helping but I'm certainly not joining them. I'll be out of their sight so they won't notice that I'm alive. I still don't know if they'd kill me or not.

But right now, I'm not willing to find out. I have to keep training. My sensei, Kaito-san, has been telling me my posture is too stiff but no matter how relaxed I am, he tells me the same thing over and over again. He's even proven it. He beat me to the ground and told me that I would have been able to block his attacks had I been more fluid with my movements. But I still can't relax!

"Here, let's try something else. I've already had you stretch, meditate, and I even beat you in a fight just to see if you'll loosen up and none of that's working. I...think you are having problems relaxing due to natural reflex. Something's bothering you. Is it okay if I ask a personal question?" Kaito asked me this and I sighed.

"Sure. Have at it." I told him as I sat down on the training mat.

"Were you beaten as a child or at any recent point in time? You flinch more often than you should, although it seems controlled somewhat. It's almost like you know you're flinching and you're trying to break yourself of it." Kaito said. I laughed slightly. He was so laid back. He was raised on the streets of Edo so it was only natural. He eventually got off the streets and learned Tae Kwon Do from the best of the best before deciding to teach martial arts. And now he still speaks about serious matters with a very laid back tone.

"Um well. I was recently in debt for someone and he wasn't exactly the nicest man and hit me rather often while I was paying off his debt. All he required was that I serve him until he found me of no further use." I told him, scratching the back of my head and laughing nervously. I didn't talk about Serizawa often since it brought up bad memories but I've been slowly getting over it.

"What possible debt would make you actually agree to serve someone who hit you until they tell you that you can leave?! He could have very well kept you until you died!" Kaito told me, sounding shocked, and I sighed before staring at my upturned palms.

"Well, the debt wasn't too bad since I owed him my life." I told Kaito with a small but sad smile.

"Ah. That must be the reason. Well, I'm going to have to ask you to go have a proper talk with him or the people who were there. I need

you to learn to calm down. You're too jumpy. Everything I've tried hasn't worked so the only thing I think will work now is to get a proper resolve with the person who caused you so much pain. I understand that this is sort of an overkill but it's also a last resort for a reason." Kaito told me and I shook my head.

"I can't. He's no longer living. His allies, my only friends, overthrew him while I was still in his service and I ran when they came after me for seeing things I shouldn't. I'm sure that I could beat them with how strong I am now but I just can't face them knowing they'd intended to kill me those years ago." I told Kaito. I was now clenching my fists and trying to keep from tearing up. I'd abandoned my friends that day and then they were forced to hunt me down. No, I couldn't face them if I wanted to.

"You're going to have to if you want to get over this. As it is, you'll become a better fighter if you can start relaxing. You're far too tense. That's okay for both shooting with the yumi and wielding the sword since you relax at the appropriate intervals but in martial arts, you have to be completely relaxed for long periods of time and then tense at a moment's notice. You're too tense for that. You will have to either talk to them or quit martial arts. I can't teach you if you're so tense." Kaito said as he shook his head. I stared at him for a few seconds before comprehending his words.

"No. I can't. I guess I'll just have to give up Tae Kwon Do. I can stick to Old Style Kendo and my yumi." I told him, slightly irritated that he'd even suggested that I do that. I got up and bowed to him. "We'll meet again someday. But for now, I must go to Kyoto. I may not meet them but I'll certainly help them. After all, this is the Shinsengumi we're talking about." I told him and smirked when he gaped. He'd had no idea that I'd been a part of THE Shinsengumi or that they'd tried to hunt me down.

I walked out the door, leaving my shocked sensei to stare after me. I had a long walk ahead of me. I went to one of the abandoned apartment places and slid the third door back. This was where I lived. I grabbed my messenger bag and hat along with my sword, yumi and a quiver full of arrows before taking my bag and stuffing another set of the clothes I was wearing into it along with whatever food I had. It wouldn't be enough for the trip but I could use the money I've earned over the years to buy more along the way. I put on my hat and strapped on my sword before walking out and closing the door behind me.

I was going to willingly walk back into hell.

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Author's Note: So I rewatched the last episode of Hakuouki Reimeiroku and thought, 'You know what, I won't stand for this! I NEED to know what happened to Ibuki after that.' I watched Hakuouki and saw NOTHING on Ibuki and threw a fit so I decided to write about it and still keep the fanfiction part in. I just HAVE to mess up the plot of Hakuouki somehow! So anyways, you'll see what I did later on in the story. Please review! I want to hear what you think! I have up to chapter 10 written right now so if you review, I'll speed up the updates. Until then, it'll probably be either a weekly or monthly occurrence. Thanks for reading! I know this chapter sucks but I promise it gets better!

## 2. Chapter 2

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### Chapter 2

The trip to Kyoto wasn't that bad. However, as soon as I got to Kyoto, the place was literally hell. The citizens still hated Shinsengumi but said that they were improving. I just hmphed and kept walking. I couldn't stand to think of how everyone was doing since I'd left. If they were better off, good for them. I didn't want to hear about it. I wandered the city for a few hours after I'd arrived and the sun was about to set.

Several people were going home in a rush saying something about monsters coming out in the night. I just walked down the street. I would have ran immediately but I couldn't. If only I hadn't run into the people I was trying to avoid. Heisuke's eyes had immediately widened when he recognized me and he tried to grab my hand with a smile on his face but I'd backed away from him. He looked hurt for a second before I finally gained sense and turned around, running as if my life depended on it. It probably did.

The Shinsengumi groups were everywhere I went. I had to hide in several alleys and ramen shops and by the end of the day, I had no idea what to do. I was so lost and confused and I didn't want to be brought back to the HQ where they'd surely kill me. Hijikata would make sure of that. I'd kept the events at the Shinsengumi a secret but that man was so paranoid, he'd kill me just to make sure.

I eventually settled in an alley and sat down on the ground, holding my head. "Why did I come back?" I choked out to myself. My question reverberated off the walls of the alley and looked around before exiting the alley. I looked up into the sky to see the bright moon. I allowed myself to just stand there, resting. Unfortunately, my luck had run out. I looked to my right and my blood ran cold.

Something I thought I'd never have the displeasure to see again was standing there, bloodlust obvious in his eyes. It's white hair shifted slightly in the wind and I felt like I'd been punched in the stomach with all the air in my lungs forced out. No...I thought they'd quit that research! It nearly killed all of us! It saw me and lunged. My eyes narrowed and I drew my sword. I remembered where exactly to stab in order to kill it. The heart.

I sidestepped it's charge and brought my sword back, stabbing it straight through the chest. It slumped forward and fell with a sickening thunk. I shook the blood off of my blade and was about to sheath it when I heard footsteps running around the corner to my right. I looked back at the thing on the ground and sneered in disgust. They were testing on Shinsengumi members now?

I looked back up and saw two of my old friends standing there, eyes widened and mouths agape.

"Good afternoon Heisuke, Shinpachi." I greeted. There went all my plans. Now all I had to do was keep them from capturing me and maybe talk them up a bit. "This yours?" I asked them, gesturing to the demonic thing.

"R-Ryunosuke..." Heisuke muttered. I huffed irritably.

"Yay, you remember my name. Figured you'd forget after so long. After all, I was pretty expendable wasn't I? Just another face around the HQ." I was letting my emotions get the better of me but I couldn't help it. I wanted them to know the pain I went through after they'd tried to kill me even if I said this with such a cheerful tone which had become second nature to me after all these years of being nice to people.

"Ryunosuke, it wasn't like that! We had no choice and you know it!" Shinpachi told me and I narrowed my eyes.

"Let me know when Souji feels that way. Then I'll consider thinking you didn't want to kill me. Until then, goodbye!" I told them as I sheathed my sword and began walking away. I knew I was baiting them but I wanted to see if they'd actually draw their swords on me. I heard footsteps walk towards me and a hand was on my shoulder. My hand immediately went to my sword and they backed off. I turned around and glared at Heisuke.

"Good. Bye." I told him again but this time he grabbed my arm more forcefully. I growled slightly. "If you're planning on taking me back to the Shinsengumi, you should know I won't go without a fight. Don't start what you can't finish." I told him. His grip remained firm.

"Ibuki-kun, don't fight us. You'll only end up hurt. Just come peacefully." he told me and I chuckled dryly.

"Me? Hurt? You're not the only ones who've been working their ass off these past few years. You're talking to a trained Old Style Kendo swordsman of Master Level, best archer in the region, and a newly trained martial artist. Still think I'll get hurt?" I asked with a small smile when I saw the shock go over their faces. I was stretching it a bit, but I wanted them to know who they were dealing with. That was when Shinpachi drew his sword.

"Enough of this foolishness Ryunosuke. Come peacefully. It's two against one. Master Level or not, you're still beaten." he told me and I outright laughed.

"The style, Shinpachi! The style is what matters! I know yours and Heisuke's but you don't know mine. It's Old Style Kendo. The original. It's unpredictable..." I told him as I drew my sword. getting into stance. "And to think I willingly walked into this hell..." I muttered to myself as Shinpachi lunged at me. I easily parried his blow and left a cut on his cheek before he finally realized I moved. I smirked and stepped back, watching as he realized he had a shallow cut on his face.

"W-What the hell..." he muttered. I smiled at him.

"Like I said, don't start something you can't finish." I told him

before I charged him. I left two more shallow cuts, one on his right forearm and left thigh, before slipping around his blade and standing behind him. "You're so slow!" I told him before hearing another sword get drawn. "Oh Heisuke, take Shinpachi's example. Is fighting me a good idea?" I asked him.

I wanted him to seriously think about it. I didn't want to hurt him too. Shinpachi was getting angry at this point but I shrugged and sheathed my sword before jumping on the roof of the nearest house. "Like I said. this is good bye. I may see you later. I'll be assisting the Shinsengumi from the sidelines." I told them with a smile before leaving.

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Author's Note: I just want everyone to know that half the crap involving Old Style Kendo probably doesn't exist so don't quote me on it. I just needed a style that Ibuki could know that no one else knows so he'll have an advantage. The yumi is, however, real. I did my research. The samurai actually used to use the yumi just as often if not more often than their swords. Pretty awesome really. Oh! And I know next to NOTHING about martial arts so don't quote me on that either. Also, I'm sorry if this fanfic seems half-assed but I REALLY wanted to write it but I'm not in my best mindset. The rest of my fanfics are good but in my opinion, my style is extremely loose in this one. I'll try to improve but I don't know if I'll be able to with how this was already started.

### 3. Chapter 3

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#### Chapter 3

-Third Person POV-

Shinpachi and Heisuke just stared in the direction Ryunosuke left in before they looked at each other and nodded. They had to tell Hijikata about this. Ryunosuke said he'd be helping them from the sidelines but could they still trust him? Shinpachi looked at the cuts Ibuki left on him and winced slightly. They were just thin lines just barely cut into his skin through his clothes but they were painful. If Ryunosuke had been seriously trying to kill him, he would have. No doubt about that. But how did he master the sword in so little time?! It takes years and years to master it! Especially with something as complicated as Old Kendo which was rumored to be one of the hardest styles of swordfight to learn!

"That was..." Heisuke muttered.

"Yeah...let's go back to HQ. I think Hijikata-san is going to want to hear about this." Shinpachi told Heisuke as they started walking back to HQ. When they got there, Hijikata was waiting for them at the gate.

"You two didn't come back with the rest of the group. What happened? Why are you injured?" Hijikata asked Shinpachi.

"Well...we ran into an old friend." Heisuke told him hesitantly.

"Ibuki-kun is still alive." Heisuke blurted out and Hijikata raised his eyebrows.

"Well this is a change in plans. Did he tell you anything besides try to slice Shinpachi to ribbons?" Hijikata asked. He noticed how unsettled the two looked.

"Well, he said he'd be helping the Shinsengumi from the sidelines before he left..." Heisuke muttered, making Hijikata raise an eyebrow.

"Why did you let him get away? He still knows the things he shouldn't and he still has to be dealt with." Hijikata said, eyes narrowing.

"We tried but before we could lay a finger on him, he was gone!" Shinpachi explained while gesturing to the cuts.

"Our patrols groups will be ordered to capture him. He must be caught at all costs. We don't know who he's told about the failed warriors and he can't ruin the Shinsengumi's reputation. Starting tomorrow, all patrol groups will also be looking for him. I'll be expecting you both for dinner in a few minutes." Hijikata told them before turning his back to them and walking back to the dining room.

"Let's get your wounds wrapped and then attend dinner. We wouldn't want Chizuru worrying about blood getting in your food." Heisuke told Shinpachi as he led him to where Yamazaki treated his patients. After each of his cuts, including his cheek, were covered, they walked to the dining room where everyone had serious faces while Chizuru looked confused.

"Who's Ibuki?" she asked.

"I see you told everyone Hijikata-san." Heisuke said as both he and Shinpachi sat down in their spots, drawing attention from Chizuru's question. They didn't have time to answer it.

"Yes. I believe it's decision making time and we have a very short amount of time to do it. Kondo-san, what do you suggest we do about him? We can't just leave him to do as he pleases. He knows too much to just let him go." Hijikata told them.

"Wait, does he know about the Rasetsu? Why would he know about that?" Chizuru asked.

"Chizuru, Ibuki used to work for Serizawa, one of the founders for the Shinsengumi. He used to do what you do today and delivered sake and tea to the man like he was supposed to. But he'd also be forced to give Serizawa shoulder rubs in the middle of meetings and he even got in trouble for protecting a giesha girl from his master's wrath. In return, Serizawa would hit him if he did anything wrong or if he felt he wanted to." Hijikata explained before Chizuru interrupted.

"Excuse me for the interruption but you didn't explain why he served Serizawa." she told him innocently.

"Well, Serizawa brought him from the woods just outside of Kyoto. Ibuki had been on his way to start over with a new life in Kyoto when he'd been attacked by rogue samurai like the ones we deal with on patrols and they'd beaten him to brink of death. He couldn't move or do anything to get himself food so when Serizawa came across him, he was starving. Serizawa gave him food and in return, Ibuki had to work for him as a servant. That was the only reason Ibuki had to stay in the Shinsengumi. So when we had to overthrow Serizawa for trying to take over Shinsengumi for himself, Ibuki ran away during the assassination knowing all of the Shinsengumi's secrets. Souji had pushed him into the river while it was a heavy downpour with the flood took him down the river. We thought he'd drowned but I guess he lived and now we have to find him and either kill him or make him join us." Hijikata told her, addressing everyone in the last few sentences.

"It won't be easy to kill him if that's what you intend. He's rather skilled from his years of being away practicing. He told us he's trained in Old Style Kendo and he was carrying a bow along with a bunch of arrows. As you can see, he's quit talented to have gotten some cuts on me before I even saw him move!" Shinpachi said, gesturing to his arm and cheek where the bandages were visible.

"Yeah! He was so fast! I was watching him fight and I had trouble keeping up with his movements! It'll be harder to kill him than get him to help us." Heisuke told Hijikata who sighed, sounding frustrated.

"We'll have to find him and decide. Our first priority is to capture him. We'll bring him here and if there's no talking him into working for us, we'll kill him. Starting tomorrow, patrols will be on search for him, got it?" he declared and everyone nodded. Even Kondo nodded.

"I agree with you Toshi. I remember him. He was quite the rebel and I would hate to think of what he could do if we left him running around." he told Hijikata.

"Good. Let the others know tomorrow morning. I think catching Ibuki may need to become one of our top priorities for the next couple of days. Of course, we can't abandon our duties but if someone spots Ibuki, he must be caught. Understood?" Hijikata told them. Everyone nodded.

"Good. Now everyone go to bed. It's getting late."

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Author's Note: I'm hoping that you guys stick along for the ride. I just think that I could have done more to the first chapter but I can't go back and edit it now. So if you're still reading after the first chapter, thanks for sticking to it and I hope you like the future chapters. Please review! I love hearing what people have to say and I always read every review and take it to heart. Anyway, keep reading! Next chapter will up within the next week!



#### 4. Chapter 4

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Author's Note: Thank you, \_Kimagure 'Aya' Author\_ and \_Ainhoall,\_ for the reviews! I'm glad you both like it. It makes me so happy to know you like it. XD

#### Chapter 4

-Third Person POV with Ibuki Ryunosuke-

Ryunosuke went wandering about the city for a major part of the night before he finally settled in an alley around the outskirts of town for the night. He knew it wasn't the most comfortable place but that was the only place he could sleep. He woke up when the early morning rays of the sun hit his face and he was immediately wide awake. He got up off the ground and stood up. He had to find a place to stay. He wasn't staying in another alley. He had very little money left so he couldn't rent a room. And he had no friends that would help him. The only option he had other than hiding in a different place every night was to stay with the Shinsengumi. 'No way! Never! They'll just bind me under their rules and force me to follow them! I can't! I won't!' Ryunosuke thought as he walked out of the alley.

He walked across the street and bought one of those western apples. Honeycrisp, was it? It wasn't much for being a foreign fruit but he didn't complain. He took a bite out of the fruit as he walked down the street, ducking into alleys every time he saw a Shinsengumi group go by. 'They look like they're looking for someone.' he thought. He snorted and finished the apple before throwing the core into a random trashcan in that particular alley.

"At this rate, I'll visit every alley in the city before I make any headway." he muttered to himself. He was so annoyed with having to stop every ten minutes. "The Shinsengumi has grown a lot in the last few years." he said to himself as he walked out of the alley. He began concentrating on future plans, not noticing the sky blue uniforms until it was too late.

"Well if it isn't little Ibuki-kun!" a voice cut him from his thoughts and he looked up and snarled. No way in hell... It was Souji. He investigated the group in front of him. Most of them were in the same uniforms with the exception of a girl dressed in boy's clothing. His eyes narrowed at Souji.

"Tch. What do you want?" he asked. Souji had an amused glint in his eyes.

"Oh didn't you hear? The patrol groups of Shinsengumi were told you'd been sighted in the area so we could capture you. Trust me, Hijikata-san has A LOT to talk to you about and he's actually considering not killing you." Souji said with a smirk. "You can come peacefully or we can go the hard way. Your choice." Souji told him,

putting his hand on the hilt of his sword. Ryunosuke glared at him.

"I would say I doubt you would start a fight in public but then again, you're Souji. Starting a commotion is your thing." Ryunosuke told him as he drew his sword.

"How funny! You really think you can take all of us?" Souji said as the rest of the Shinsengumi group drew their swords.

"Tch. Dirty Souji. Just dirty." he told him as he sheathed his sword. "I'll surrender...for now. But I swear, if you-" Ryunosuke began but Souji didn't listen to any of it. He simply tackled Ryunosuke to the ground and pinned his arms behind him with his foot. Ryunosuke knew he would easily be able to get out of Souji's grip but he didn't fight. He knew Souji and he knew that Souji would just say that he resisted.

"Giving up so easily, Ibuki-kun?" Souji asked from behind him. Ryunosuke just sighed and put his chin to the ground.

"I said I surrender and I meant it. Quit making a scene." Ryunosuke told him as Souji hauled him off the ground.

"Okita-san? Is that really necessary?" the girl asked. Ryunosuke sighed as Souji had two of the Shinsengumi members hold each of his arms and force him to walk after Souji and the girl.

"Chizuru, I thought I told you! He's dangerous!" Souji told 'Chizuru' and Ryunosuke sighed.

"I'd appreciate it if you didn't give personal information about me to someone who doesn't even know me." Ryunosuke told Souji who turned around with an evil smirk. He walked over to Ibuki and pat him on the head.

"Once a dog, always a dog. You may be dangerous but in the end, it doesn't matter. You're still small and the bigger dogs will still chew you up and spit you out." Souji said with a smile on his face that made Ryunosuke want to spit at him.

They continued walking until they got to the Shinsengumi HQ. Ryunosuke immediately took in all of the familiar scenery of the wide open mansions that held the Shinsengumi, slowly becoming more and more anxious. He almost felt his original survival instincts coming back but he suppressed them as they approached where Hijikata was most likely staying.

"Hijikata-san! Look who we found wandering around and not paying attention to his surroundings as usual!" Souji shouted before sliding open the door to the room. Hijikata was sitting at his desk writing when he turned around and looked rather surprised at Ryunosuke's appearance. "I see you took Serizawa's words to heart. You look well. You two, let him go." Hijikata told the Shinsengumi members holding Ryunosuke and he was let go. Ibuki adjusted his clothes and stood straight before nodding to Hijikata and relaxing his posture with a hand on his hip.

"Was there something you needed me for? Execution? Life of servitude? Gonna turn me into one of those monsters? Tell me, I'm curious as to

what to expect in the future." Ryunosuke asked and Hijikata raised an eyebrow.

"Still got that tongue after all these years. Though, you sound more mature. Have you learned a lot in the past few years? Perhaps respect?" Hijikata asked. Ryunosuke smirked.

"And since when were you soft and since when did you care? If I remember correctly, you were among the people that I deemed as 'Don't get near them, they'll just yell at you for being an idiot.'" Ryunosuke said, thinking his attitude would tick the man off like it used to.

"Well Ibuki, first off, I should probably still be on that list. Second, I was thinking about giving you a choice in the matter but I'm beginning to regret even thinking about it. Third, as long as you're in my presence, I would prefer that you quit being a smartass and just listen for once. Now, do you want to hear the deal or not?" Hijikata asked. Ryunosuke sighed and nodded.

"Sure, what do you have in mind?" He knew this wouldn't be good but he was willing to hear it if he got a choice.

"Good. Here's my proposition to you. You can either stay with us and fight for the Shinsengumi as a member and maybe help a little with some experiments and side jobs or you can be executed without the option of Harakiri. Your choice." Hijikata told Ryunosuke, watching as a look of shock came over Ryunosuke's face before being replaced with deep concentration.

Whatever concentration there was on his face quickly turned into a smile.

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Author's Note: I just came up with like, fifty different ideas for this. The plot bunnies are taking over! I hope you like them. I got so excited that I tipped my rice bowl and got it all over the table along with some sweet and sour sauce but I cleaned it up with a smile on my face. Yup, I've got some interesting ideas that I should probably stop talking about. Thanks for reading! Sorry if this chapter was either too predictable or too anticlimactic. I just really needed him in the Shinsengumi so the plot could move on to more important things. X)

## 5. Chapter 5

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### Chapter 5

"Well fine. I guess it won't be that bad. Do you want me to continue with my old duties along with the Shinsengumi patrols or just the patrols?" Ryunosuke asked, shocking everyone. They'd all thought that he wouldn't be one to work for them considering he wouldn't have even

thought about it when he was younger.

"Your old duties? Serizawa isn't around anymore. You have no one to serve." Hijikata told Ryunosuke matter-of-factly. Ryunosuke knew that it would just be until Hijikata could figure out a suitable punishment for leaving but he didn't really care.

"I'm well aware of that. Well, according to some of my relations in other regions that I'm not going to tell you, the only thing I'm good at besides swordfight and shooting a target is serving people. Other than that, I suck at everything." Ryunosuke admitted and everyone facepalmed besides Chizuru who giggled at the way he worded it. Hijikata coughed.

"Ah yes. You can serve me and Kondo along with guests but I don't want you distracted from the Shinsengumi's duties. If you need help knowing where everything is, talk to Heisuke or one of the others. Chizuru has the same job as you so if there's something you need to do but have to go on patrol, just let her know and she'll get it taken care of. You can retrieve sake since you know where the liquor store is as well as just keep the place clean. Good?" Hijikata asked Ryunosuke who nodded. He'd learned that he thought better when he was cleaning and it made him feel like he was doing something no one else could/would do. He was indeed different from when he first came there. Back then, he detested the chores but after so many years away, serving random people along the way as a job and as a way to pay off debt, he learned that doing chores was a small but important job.

"Good. Chizuru? Would you please show Ibuki to one of the spare rooms?" Hijikata asked the girl who'd stood quietly by the door the entire time.

"Uh...yes! Right away!" Chizuru said, standing straight with her chin up. Ryunosuke smirked and hmphed in amusement. "Right this way." Chizuru said as she led Ryunosuke out the door and down the walkway outside the rooms.

"So Chizuru, what have the guys told you about me since this whole fiasco began?" Ryunosuke asked the rather nervous girl.

"Well um...besides Souji telling me you were dangerous, no one else has really said anything besides briefing me on your time here. I'm sorry." she said, sounding like if she said a wrong word, she'd get hit. He scoffed but chuckled anyway.

"I'm hurt. I figured Heisuke would at least talk about me. Oh well. Guess I'm just a dead man walking to them." Ryunosuke said, letting his feeling of isolation slip into his voice.

"Oh no! Don't worry! I'm sure they still care about you! It's just that they probably didn't talk about you since they thought you were dead. They wouldn't want to relive memories of someone who's dead. I think it's a disgrace to the dead person's honor." Chizuru said as she opened the door to a guest room. Ryunosuke chuckled.

"What honor? If they told you about my time here, you would know I had no honor or dignity. I was just a stray given another chance at life. Hell, I wouldn't care if they defiled my very name at this point. I've given up fighting them. They could've danced on my grave

and I wouldn't-" Ryunosuke began as he set his bag down only for Chizuru to interrupt.

"No! Don't say things like that! Everyone has honor that they want to keep! You can't just give up!" Chizuru said as Ryunosuke set his things down.

"Chizuru, you're a nice young lady and you're going to grow up to be a very responsible woman. You're going to realize as you get older that there are people who can't regain their honor OR dignity even after spending the rest of their life trying to regain it. I'm a broken man, Chizuru. I can't be helped. Like Souji said, once a dog, always a dog." Ryunosuke told the girl as he laid his bow and arrows gently onto the ground along with his hat. "Now, what's first? I believe there are chores to take care of." he asked as Chizuru bit her lip.

"R-Right. Okay. Follow me." Chizuru said as she led Ryunosuke.

"I'm sorry if I make you feel bad but I don't want you to do things to help me especially if it's useless. Don't worry about it." Ryunosuke said as he put a hand on her shoulder. She smiled up at him.

"You're part of the Shinsengumi now. If there's any way for you to regain your honor, it would be here. Believe it or not, it's been very peaceful and everyone loves it here since I got here. They're probably not as strict as they used to be when you were here last." Chizuru told Ryunosuke as they walked into the kitchen. "I'm going to serve Hijikata-san tea like I usually do. I thought that you would at least want to know where the kitchen was. Over here, down the hall in the room on the right is the cleaning supplies and the dirty dishes are usually kept in a tub in the kitchen until after the meal time is over. That's when the dishes are cleaned and put back in their places. I won't need your help until lunch which is in a few hours. I'll come and get you when it's time, okay? Until then, I think it's best that you clear up your feelings with the other Shinsengumi members. I'm sure they'd like to see you again." Chizuru said as she started boiling the water for the tea.

"Oh umm. Thanks then. I'll be happy to help you out with lunch. Just come and get me and I'll help." Ryunosuke said with a smile before he left. The first place he thought to go was the courtyard. He'd gotten to see the steps up to the main building and they looked like they were shaded nicely so he figured it was as good a place as any to sit around and wait for lunch time to come around. Unfortunately, luck didn't seem to be on his side because apparently all of his old friends had the exact same idea. He noticed them and was about to walk away when he heard a voice call out to him.

"Yo! Ibuki-kun! Don't think you can run!" Heisuke called out and Ryunosuke gave a sigh of defeat before sulked on his way up to the steps.

"What do you want?" Ryunosuke spat as he sat down in the middle of the stairs, away from where Heisuke, Shinpachi, Harada, and Saitou were sitting off to the side. At least Souji wasn't there to flaunt his victory.

"Just wanted to say hi. Geez, you're worse than how Saitou used to be

when he first showed up! Loosen up! You're on the same side as us now! Besides, I want you to show me those awesome skills you used to cut up Shinpachi! That was soooo cool! Please show me!" Heisuke begged and Ryunosuke smiled slightly.

"I guess you're right. Alright. I'll show you. But you're my sparring partner." Ryunosuke said with a smirk that made Heisuke's face go pale before his attitude went back to normal.

"Fine! I bet I could beat you even if Shinpachi couldn't! You probably just caught him by surprise!" Heisuke said as they walked down the steps to stand on the flat pavement. Shinpachi hmphed.

"Hey! That's not true! He's just too fast!" Shinpachi shouted from his spot. Ryunosuke smiled and shook his head. He missed these guys. At least now he stood on the same ground they did.

"Nope, you're just slow." he told the patched up samurai before drawing his sword. Heisuke drew his and they both flipped the blade to the flat side. Everyone watched Ryunosuke as he got into his odd stance.

"Just so you guys know, Old Style Kendo is a combination of Kendo and Martial Arts. Expect bruises from things other than the sword." Ryunosuke told everyone. That was what Tano-san, his old sensei, used to tell him.

"Oh it can't be that bad! Give it all you got!" Heisuke said as he got into his stance.

"You'll regret saying that, Heisuke. You better have a doctor ready when I'm through with you." Ryunosuke told him, not letting his stance waver. He'd been mostly trained to stay level headed but still have the ability to think while fighting. Most warriors had to clear their minds but in Old Style Kendo, you had to think of every possible way to get out of every possible mess that could occur and that included dirty tricks like shin kicks and headbutts. With all of this at his disposal, he knew they would seriously need a doctor if the fight went for more than three matches.

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Author's Note: Okay so I know that some of the characters seem OOC but they'll even out soon. I just rewatched Hakuouki Reimeiroku so I got a refresher on how everyone feels about Ryunosuke. I'm sooo sorry if they've been OOC up until this point or still are. By the way, apparently Old Style Kendo IS a thing. I looked it up and I'll be using Ryunosuke as a bit of a war machine. This website talks all about it up towards the top. It sounds brutal! I don't think I could have picked a better style to make Ibuki learn! www. (Just copy and paste the URL. Then take out the parenthesis around the dots.) Thanks for reading! Please review!

## 6. Chapter 6

**\*\*You Have to Be Willing to Understand\*\***

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series, or any of the characters or Ibuki would have had a part in Hakuouki.

## Chapter 6

Heisuke was the first to make a move, like Ryunosuke knew he would. He decided to go for a slash to the right which Ryunosuke quickly defended before swiftly kicking Heisuke's feet out from under him and kicking his sword out of Heisuke's hands in a disarming gesture. He pointed his sword at Heisuke's stunned face which soon turned excited.

"Wow! That was pretty cool! Where did you learn this?" he asked as Ryunosuke helped him up.

"An old man who dragged my sorry ass out of the river. He also taught me how to shoot the yumi and I made my own. The one you saw me with earlier is the one I built myself." Ryunosuke told Heisuke, making sure his voice was loud enough for everyone to hear so they wouldn't ask the same questions later.

"Damn Ibuki-kun! That hurt! Let's go again! I think I'll be able to defend myself this time." Heisuke said enthusiastically, grabbing his sword off the ground and getting into stance.

"I highly doubt it." Ryunosuke said as he got back into his stance.

"We'll see, Ibuki-kun!" Heisuke told him just before lunging at Ryunosuke. Everyone watched, interested in the new style, as Ryunosuke beat Heisuke again and again while Ryunosuke didn't get so much as a scratch or bruise.

"Alright, I think you need to go get your injuries taken care of before lunch. At this rate, I'll end up knocking you unconscious." Ryunosuke said, scratching the back of his head slightly with a smile on his face.

"N-No! One more round!" Heisuke defended, panting and shaking as he got into a lousy version of his stance. Shinpachi sighed and got up.

"Come on Heisuke. Ibuki's right. You're beat." Shinpachi said with a small laugh as he ruffled the boy's bangs.

"Ouch! Ibuki head butted me at least twice you idiot! Ah! Be careful! Ouch!" Heisuke began as Shinpachi put one of Heisuke's arms over his shoulders and carried him in the direction of the infirmary.

"Ibuki! We have to prepare lunch! Are you ready? Hey! What happened to Heisuke-san?" Chizuru asked as she ran into the courtyard.

"Heisuke got his ass handed to him by Ibuki. Hilarious really. He's so used to using dirty tricks. If I remember correctly, you threw dirt in my face just before I pushed you off the bridge." a new voice added. Ryunosuke's eyes narrowed. He'd noticed Souji quite awhile ago but he never said anything. He just continued sparring with Heisuke all the while pointing glares in Souji's direction.

"Souji! Stop it! Old Style Kendo actually involves grappling and ALL possible tricks. That's just how the style is. If you can't respect the style, Ibuki has no obligation to respect yours. I understand you two are still on sour terms but if you can't get over your differences in the next month, there will be consequences I'm not willing to take. Ibuki, I'll have to ask you to refrain from literally beating everyone to the ground during practice even if it's a spar. If the injuries go any further than a few bruises that can easily be healed, you'll deal with consequences, understood?" Hijikata's voice rang out from the doors to the main building.

"Ah, yes. Sorry. I thought Heisuke would get tired of getting beat after the third round but I guess I was wrong. I'll refrain from harming anyone any further while I'm here." Ryunosuke told Hijikata who nodded before turning to Chizuru.

"I assume you came to get Ibuki to come help you with lunch?" he inquired. Chizuru nodded and Hijikata gave her a small smile. "Okay. I'll get everyone to meet in the dining room soon. Ibuki, you're welcome to dine with us if you'd like." was all Hijikata said before disappearing through the doors again.

"So Chizuru, should we go prepare the food?" Ryunosuke asked the girl who was still staring at the door.

"Ah, yes. Let's go. I was thinking we could do Gyudon Donburi since we still have leftover rice and beef while we add Yakizakana as a side since we seem to have an abundance of fish. What do you think?" she asked as they walked into the kitchen.

"Sounds good. I'll start the rice for the Gyudon while you start the Yakizakana, okay? This way we can each focus on our dish and finish faster." Ryunosuke said with a smile as he pulled out a pot and started working on the Gyudon, cutting the beef and starting the rice.

"Great! Let me know when you're done!" Chizuru said cheerfully as she began working on grilling the fish. Ryunosuke finished his dish before Chizuru and started helping her by pulling out another pan to work on getting more fish cooked.

"Ibuki-kun! You're dirtying another pan! I'm almost done anyway!" Chizuru told him and he only smiled slightly.

"I'll wash it myself then. Don't worry about it. Let's just get everyone's food served, okay? I've got the Gyudon bowl along with everyone's dishes and some sake while you carry the plate with the Yakizakana." Ryunosuke told her as he put the last fish on the plate.

"But Ibuki! I can carry the dishes! You don't want to drop something!" Chizuru defended and Ryunosuke shrugged.

"As long as you think you can handle it. You can't drop anything either. Ready?" Ryunosuke asked as he opened the door and grabbed the Gyudon bowl and bottles of sake while Chizuru got the plate of fish and dishes.

Ryunosuke let her walk ahead of them as they walked to the dining room. He noticed her stop and sit down in front of the door before



knocking and saying, "I'm coming in!" She opened the door and bowed before grabbing the dishes and distributing them to everyone including Ryunosuke and her own spots. Ryunosuke just walked in and started scooping out everyone's portions and giving it to them, making sure they were all even.

"Sit down and relax Chizuru. I can handle the rest." he told the girl and she nodded.

"Thank you Ibuki-kun." she told him as he gave everyone a grilled fish and set the extra plates down just outside on the walkway. He took the bottles of sake and the small cups before handing everyone a cup and every other person a bottle of sake.

"You didn't have to bring the sake." Hijikata told Ryunosuke who only smiled.

"But it's my job isn't it? Can't fight natural instincts. You're unfortunate though. I seem to have given up shoulder rubs and foot massages a while back." Ryunosuke told Hijikata, making the man give him an amused smirk.

"Of course..." Hijikata muttered. Everyone bowed their head and in unison said, "Thank you/Thanks for the food!" Chizuru blushed and said it was nothing while Ryunosuke just stared. He never usually got thanked.

"No problem guys." he eventually told them and bowed his head as well before digging into his food. He had to admit, he was a pretty good cook from his days with Tano-san. The man taught him a lot of recipes from scratch and now he wished he'd thanked him more properly back then. The air around them was heavy with tension until Kondo broke it.

"So Ibuki-kun. I'm glad to see you back. After Souji came back saying he thought you had drowned, it was sad to think that you were gone. Everyone kind of missed your rash comments and we actually had to do our chores for a few years." Kondo said, making Ryunosuke chuckle and drink his small cup of sake.

"How nice. And here I thought everyone just forgot about me." Ryunosuke commented, putting the cup down so he could pour himself another cup.

"Nuh uh! Heisuke didn't stop whining about it for months! And believe it or not, Saito did solitary training more often since he wasn't teaching you everyday! Everyone missed you in some way after you left...well everyone but Souji but you two never got along from the beginning plus you made him have to wash mud out of his hair." Shinpachi blurted. He'd already drank quite a few cups of sake and he was getting more obnoxious. Souji chuckled.

"I missed you too. But I only missed you because you made everyone more happy and they were all moping around for at least two weeks before deciding that they needed to move on. I almost felt bad for killing you until I thought about the mud in my hair. Now I feel bad for letting you live."

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Author's Note: Sorry Souji's a bit of an ass but Ryunosuke and his relationship kinda depends on it right now so sorry! It'll fix itself later! You'll see! And okay, I know Hijikata is indeed EXTREMELY out of character. I'll also be explaining that later on in the story. Anyways, there's a little button at the bottom of the page that you can use to review! Again, thanks Kimagure 'Aya' Author and Ainhoall for reviewing! I'm soooooo happy someone actually likes this! Thanks for reading!

## 7. Chapter 7

**\*\*You Have to Be Willing to Understand\*\***

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### Chapter 7

"Souji! I thought I told you to behave! You two need to learn to cooperate and you can't do that if you're constantly at each other's throats." Hijikata told them before he continued eating. That was when lunch took a familiar turn. Shinpachi was arguing with Heisuke about why he stole food off of Heisuke's plate and Ryunosuke had forgotten that Kondo didn't drink so he'd taken his bottle of sake and was distributing it to the people closest to him. Ryunosuke smiled and laughed, making everyone stop.

"Sorry, you can continue. It's just...a sense of deja vu. I missed this. I admit it. I missed you guys." Ryunosuke said as he finished off the last of his fish and drank another cup of sake. He was only slightly tipsy since he could handle his liquor really well but he still thought they should know that. Harada, who was sitting next to Ryunosuke, grabbed him around the neck in a loose chokehold and rubbed his hair.

"Awww, little Ibuki missed us! And he cut his hair now that I think about it! When did you do that?" Harada asked as Ryunosuke glared at him for ruining the bun his hair was in. He untied it and tied it back up into the more neat but still messy bun it had been in before.

"I decided to do it just after I got out of the river. I found my sword just a few dozen feet down the riverbank and I decided that it was time for a haircut. But it's growing back soooo fast! I was in Edo not too long ago and my hair was still super short back then. It's growing way too fast to be natural though." Ryunosuke said as he messed with his bangs, ignoring the giggles coming from Heisuke and Shinpachi who were laughing about how he rambled on about his hair.

"Well it looks nice on you. It also makes it easier for me to do this!" Harada said as he took the hair tie out of Ryunosuke's hair and stood up, dangling it in the air. Ryunosuke, going back to his natural instincts, jumped high enough and snatched it out of Harada's hand. Harada blinked. He'd been holding it at least three feet out of Ibuki's reach. He didn't just jump that high, did he? He smirked and tied his hair up in an extra tight knot and winked at Harada.

"Nice try Sano-san but the same tricks won't work on me. I may be short, but I can still jump higher than you." Ryunosuke told him cockily and Harada smiled before sitting down. Ryunosuke followed his example just before Hijikata and Kondo got up.

"We're going to our rooms so we can get back to work. See you later." Kondo said as they bowed and walked out the door. Heisuke smiled and held up a bottle of sake, a tint of red already on his cheeks from the alcohol.

"To having one of my bestest friends in the world back in the world of the living!" he shouted and Ryunosuke blushed slightly. He still smiled as everyone held up their cups and bottles before he held up his own. Everyone laughed and threw the cups back, downing the sake. Ryunosuke just set his down and watched as Chizuru smiled at their antics.

"They seem happier. I guess they were just as worried about you as you were of them." Chizuru said with a smile. Ryunosuke smiled back before collecting everyone's dishes. Chizuru tried to help but he held up a hand.

"Don't worry about it. Enjoy yourself. I'll get all of this taken care of." he told her as he balanced the dishes, getting ready to walk out the door. He carried the dishes out to the kitchen where the bucket of dirty dishes was before carrying the bucket to the well. On his way there, he stopped by the dining room and collected the cups and empty sake bottles, avoiding the drunken samurai's antics while also grabbing the dirty pots outside. He took them out to the well and started washing the dishes, making sure to make them as clean as possible. As he dried them off and stacked them, he got around to looking at the nice yard in was in the middle of. If he could get a plank of wood or metal, he wouldn't mind shooting his yumi here if it weren't for the rooms settled around it. It was so peaceful and perfect for form practice but if he were to miss, the arrow would shoot straight through a wall and possibly kill someone. He wouldn't dare to even try it.

He stacked the dishes and washed out the dirty dishes bucket before putting them back in the bucket and carrying it back to the kitchen. He put the stacks of dishes in their respectful places and sighed before walking to his room. He grabbed his yumi along with the arrows before walking to courtyard. He needed a wooden board or stick or SOMETHING to shoot at. He sighed in relief when he didn't see anyone in the courtyard and continued looking for a branch or a block of wood. At this point, he didn't care if he ended up breaking a few arrows shooting at a wall. He realized just how much he wanted to experience the feeling of the wood of the bow bending and each muscle in his arm constricting and pulling as he drew the string back, slowing down his thoughts and truly focusing on his surroundings. He longed for that experience all over again. He never got tired of it. He walked around the yard and didn't find anything to shoot at. Disappointed, he was about to go back to his room when he noticed Saitou walking towards him.

"Yes, Hajime-san?" Ryunosuke asked as he adjusted his bow in his grip.

"Ryunosuke, I would like to spar with you. The way I taught you." Saitou told Ryunosuke, shocking him.

"Ah, yes. Of course. I've improved off of that style as well although you're still my superior. Well, no harm in a spar, right?" Ryunosuke said as he set his bow and quiver down, drawing his sword and flipping it to the dull side. He got into the stance that Saitou had taught him and cleared his mind, switching his strategies so he wouldn't kick at or punch Saitou during the fight. He knew he would be beat by the end of this, but he still enjoyed being on a lower level and not having to rely on dirty tricks. Saitou drew his sword and flipped it, getting into his stance.

Ryunosuke knew Saitou wouldn't be the first to move so he took the chance and went for a swipe to Saitou's right side, knowing it would leave him unguarded. Sure enough, Saitou noticed the opening but was too preoccupied parrying Ryunosuke's blow so the opportunity was missed. After that, Ryunosuke didn't seem to have any weaknesses. Except one. One weakness that was constantly there but heavily guarded. Saitou noticed this and worked the guard around the area away before going for it. Ryunosuke had no time to move before Saitou's sword collided with his left ankle, causing his entire body to collapse to the ground even though Saitou barely grazed it.

"You seem to favor that foot. Did something happen?" Saitou asked, concerned.

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Author's Note: Haha! I literally went back and watched the last part of the last episode of Hakuouki Reimeiroku just to see which foot it was. Also, be warned now, Saitou is probably going to be OOC but that's only because he's super hard to write for me! I'm just going to say that he's comfortable with Ryunosuke despite what happened in the end of Reimeiroku and feels like he can talk to him instead of remaining silent and making things awkward. Thanks for reading! Leave a review if you have a suggestion, comment, or idea you'd like to share! I enjoy hearing from you!

## 8. Chapter 8

**\*\*You Have to Be Willing to Understand\*\***

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### Chapter 8

Ibuki scowled.

"Souji. He threw a pin at me before pushing me off the bridge and it severed a few nerves in the back of my leg. I don't feel pain or temperature difference from halfway up the back of my leg to just before my toes. I can still feel pressure but I just can't feel pain, hot, or cold. I have a major nerve severed where the pin stabbed straight down to the bone." Ryunosuke explained as he pulled the leg of his tights up just halfway up the shin to show Saitou the area where sunken in scar tissue lay.

"Does it cause you pain at any point in time?" Saitou asked.

"No. It used to give me phantom pains but now it's just kind of there. I can't even feel anything near the area so it's not like it will hurt if you hit it. I just exaggerate the impact since I can't gauge it and my natural reactions take over." Ryunosuke said as he rolled his pants back down.

"Then why do you guard it so heavily if it doesn't hurt?" Saitou asked as they walked over to the steps of the main building so they could stand and talk in the shade.

"I really don't know. It just gives me a horrible feeling if I leave it unguarded. Almost like it will get chopped off and I won't notice if I don't pay constant attention to it. Unfortunately, I don't know how people see it since I can't even feel what I'm doing wrong and can't fix it." Ryunosuke said as he sat down and massaged the spot slightly through his tights with a concentrated look on his face.

"Your heel is pulled towards your body a little more than normal and it looks like it's hindering your balance not to mention you tend to drag your foot when you shift small distances. I would suggest trying to rehabilitate your ankle area so you can at least make it look like there's nothing wrong with it and you won't have to guard it." Saitou told Ryunosuke who laughed slightly.

"Believe me Hajime-san, I've tried. I can't rehabilitate it but I can work on bringing my heel out a little more and make it look more natural but I doubt it will ever function properly again. I mean, I'm fine when I walk, run, and sprint but when it comes to shifting in place, I can't hide it." Ryunosuke ran a hand through his bangs and Saitou sighed.

"Get up." he commanded and Ryunosuke immediately complied. He followed Saitou away from the steps and listened to what Saitou had to say. "I have an idea so you can at least try to fix it. Stand on that foot, just that foot and balance your weight on just that foot for a few minutes. If it starts to hurt, stop. Don't rush into it." Saitou said as he watched Ryunosuke balance on that foot, wobbling slightly.

After a few minutes, Ryunosuke nodded to Saitou. He could still do this for hours if he wanted to. He wouldn't be able to feel the pain until it started affecting the other parts of his body like his knees.

"Good. Try not to fall in this next part. This will get you used to moving your ankle in more directions than just back and forth like you do when you run. I want you to try to turn to the right just by using this foot and pivoting in place. This requires you to move your foot side to side and pull your body in that direction. Try it." Saitou said and watched as Ryunosuke bit his lip. He tried to move it just a little to the right and wobbled slightly as his ankle protested, not used to the movement even though it should have been natural to move like that.

He managed to nudge himself ever so slightly to the right through one little nudge and he put his other foot down, massaging the one he'd been standing on.

"What do you think?" Saitou asked.

"It sounds logical. What now? Come to you every day for treatment?" Ryunosuke asked sarcastically and Saitou nodded, much to his disbelief.

"Yes. Just meet me here every day after lunch and we'll continue this. I want my spar with you to be without any hindrances or injuries. It would damage my honor to consider that a victory when I clearly took advantage of a weakness that couldn't be helped." Saitou said as he crossed his arms. Ryunosuke chuckled.

"Well thank you Dr. Hajime. Any prescribed meds you need me to take?" Ryunosuke asked, making Saitou blush. "I know you're trying to help and I appreciate it. Seriously, thank you Hajime-san. By the way, does the Shinsengumi keep any flat, wooden boards for training or other disposable purposes?" Ryunosuke asked, remembering why he left his room in the first place. Saitou nodded.

"There are some boards in a shed nearby. Do you need them for some reason?" Saitou asked, completely oblivious to the fact that the yumi was so strong it could pierce heavy armor and could definitely shoot through wood. "Yes, I do. I need one or two for archery practice. I could teach it to you if you'd like." Ryunosuke said as he grabbed his bow and arrows.

"Thank you. I'll take that into consideration. Here, the boards are this way. I think I want to observe the sport before I decide to get into it." Saitou said as he led Ryunosuke to a small building a little ways off the left of the main building.

Ryunosuke picked out a few of the thinner boards so he could retrieve his arrows when he was done and then walked with Saitou back into the courtyard where he took one of the foot long by foot long boards from under his arm and set it on the steps of the main building. He took the other one and set it off to the side for later before taking an arrow and drawing it back on the bow, taking a deep breath. He allowed himself to soak in the moment before he focused on the target and let the arrow go, sending it flying through the board. The impact left a loud 'thunk' noise that echoed off the nearby buildings.

"It seems to be extremely effective." Saitou muttered, surveying the damage from his place behind Ryunosuke.

"Do you want to try? The drawing weight is a little much but I don't think you'll have too much trouble." Ryunosuke said as he handed Saitou the bow. "Draw without an arrow so I can correct your posture first that way you remember how to do it before you shoot. Also, don't focus completely on the result. Focus on your form and movements and you'll do fine. If you enter a sort of meditative state, you're doing it right." Ryunosuke said as Saitou drew the string back, straining slightly. He blushed at the fact that he really didn't have a choice in the matter considering Ryunosuke had practically shoved the bow into his hands. He was going to shoot left handed so he didn't have too much trouble. Ryunosuke nudged his feet apart slightly and made him straighten his posture and adjusted his fingers before he stood back and looked at his work.

"Release." Ryunosuke told Saitou who did as he said, releasing the string. "Hmmm...Alright. That's great. Remember that position and

let's try it for real. But first, I'm moving the board so that we don't miss and hit someone. I'll put it against that wall, okay? I can always make more arrows if they break but I can't bring someone back to life." Ryunosuke said with a small laugh before going out and changing the position of the board. "There. Alright. Draw." Ryunosuke commanded and Saitou did. Ryunosuke checked his posture and did a few small adjustments especially around the fingers so he wouldn't clip himself.

"When you shoot, don't move this hand at all whatsoever. It could end up knocking the arrow off course or send it flying into a completely different direction. Release when you're ready." Ryunosuke said and Saitou let the arrow fly after only a few seconds. Saitou did exactly as Ryunosuke told him and didn't move until the arrow hit something. It ended up hitting the wall about half a foot above the wooden plank, snapping the arrow in half, but Ryunosuke clapped Saitou on the back leaving the usually stoic samurai with a dumbfounded look on his face.

"That was an awesome first shot! I'll have to visit Tano-san and ask if he can let me custom make you a yumi! You're a natural!" Ryunosuke said as Saitou allowed himself a small smile but still looked at the ground as if ashamed.

"I still should have hit the target." Saitou told Ryunosuke who scoffed.

"In good time, my dear friend. One miss may be the difference between life and death in battle, but no one will ever hope to make their first shot as perfect as what you just performed. I still remember mine. I ended up nearly taking off my own head at least three times by almost shooting it backwards before I got the hang of it. No one's perfect on the first try." The first try...Saitou would let Ryunosuke believe that...for now...

...

Author's Note: Okay! Okay! Saitou is really OOC but I needed those two to have bonding time! Besides, Saitou just feels awkward with Ryunosuke because it's like watching his kid grow up. He taught Ryunosuke the basics and without the basics, he wouldn't be where he is so it's just kind of weird to think he had contributed to building the character of someone who barely knows him. ANYWAYS, this is the chapter I reached before deciding that I'd publish it cause the damn plot bunnies wouldn't leave me alone.

To \_Kimagure 'Aya' Author\_ , thanks for reviewing. I look forward to hearing what you have to say everytime I add a new chapter. I wish I could see Ibuki smile too. He didn't smile much in the anime. Too grumpy in my opinion. That's why I fixed that problem! Anyways, Ibuki's really nice to Chizuru because I can't honestly say I can imagine him not liking her. With the personality I built for him, they're very compatible personality-wise. I'll talk to you later, da? Thanks again for reviewing!

To \_Ainhoall\_ , \_(I can write your penname without looking at the review page now!) thanks for reviewing. You and Aya are my regulars and I'm guessing you like Saitou a lot, right? Sorry if he was too OOC here but I was on a roll and I reeeaaaalllllyyyy didn't want to erase all of that since it was too good to delete. (I did as much

editing as I could but it still came out OOC) Plus I wanted to add a bit of a twist and see if I could switch their rolls. Their relationship will have it's ups and downs throughout the story but Ibuki and Saitou will be really close friends throughout all of this. I'm glad you like the story so far and please keep reviewing!

To \_Alohamiems\_, Chizuru and Ibuki will definitely have some more screen time together. \*cackles evilly\* I can't give any hints without spoiling it but they'll be sort of like partners later on. Like I said, I can't spoil anything.

( ^-^)/(-\_- ) But I love reviews (call me a review whore but whatever. I never get a lot of reviews and this is probably the most reviews I've ever gotten that actually mean something instead of mindless crap people want to leave) so please review more often! I'm glad you love the story and I hope you stick around especially when I drop the big plot bomb.

To \_Kapurrisu\_, again, thanks for explaining that. I don't really have a grasp on certain concepts of the English language and I found out I'm moving back to America in the next few weeks so I'll be a permanent American citizen and I'll have to start going to an American high school somewhere in Texas. So yeah, I kinda needed to know that for upcoming classes. Thanks for letting me know. I'm glad you like the story! I'll try to keep up with the story while I'm settling in!

Anyways, I hope you all like it so far. Please review! If you have a question, I'll start leaving answers down here since I've been getting good reviews lately that I want to respond to. Thanks for reading!

## 9. Chapter 9

**\*\*You Have to Be Willing to Understand\*\***

Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki Reimeiroku, any of the Hakuouki series, or any of the characters or Ibuki would have had a part in Hakuouki.

### Chapter 9

"Thank you." Saitou said quietly as he gave Ryunosuke his bow back.

"Not a problem. Just a favor for a friend, Hijime-san." Ryunosuke told him as he drew the bow back and showed off his perfect posture. He closed his eyes and allowed himself to feel the flow of the bow as well as every muscle in his arms as he adjusted his grip. He opened his eyes and aimed for the target before letting the arrow go, sending it straight through the board. Ryunosuke winked at Saitou before going over to the board and retrieving the broken arrow and the wood with the other two arrows imbedded into it. He handed the broken arrow to Ryunosuke and smiled.

"It's tradition to keep your first arrow according to Tano-san. Keep it safe. Most archers keep their's as prized possessions." Ryunosuke told Saitou as he put the other two arrows back in the quiver. Saitou bowed and Ryunosuke smiled, allowing Saitou to do what he wants



knowing it was for Saitou's honor.

"Again, thank you very much." he said as he stood straight. Ryunosuke scratched the back of his head.

"No problem Hajime-san." Ryunosuke told Saitou as he turned around and left, grasping the arrow Ryunosuke had given him. 'He talks so much more than he used to. Is that just because he still considers me a friend or is it because he's gotten used to talking more often? It's confusing but then again, Saitou is confusing in general...'  
Ryunosuke thought as he brought everything back to his room.

He could shoot for hours if he wanted but he was sure there were chores to do and he didn't want Chizuru to do all of them by herself. He had to admit, that girl was growing on him. Almost like the younger sibling he never had. He quickly grabbed a broom from the cleaning closet by the kitchen and started sweeping off the dust from the walkways since he'd noticed they weren't swept yet. He didn't want people bringing dirt and dust into their rooms on their shoes. It would mean stains on the carpet and that would mean more cleaning.

As he was sweeping, he heard voices from inside one of the rooms. He respectfully kept sweeping as he walked by but he couldn't help but catch a few words out of Sannan-san's mouth.

"...something has to be done. You can't just let him off the hook. He agreed to the experiments..." Ryunosuke heard before he was out of earshot. He knew they were talking about him. And yes, he had agreed to the experiments. The reason he'd agreed was because he didn't care if he lived or died from here. He'd accomplished what he could and he didn't think he could go any further. He was content with life and wouldn't mind dying at that very moment.

Of course, a few days ago, he thought he'd have a future in helping the Shinsengumi get new recruits and help from the sidelines but now he was just considered more of a prisoner and an experiment to the higher ranks. He knew he couldn't do anything about it and was accepting his fate. Or as Hijikata put it several years ago, 'Rushing to his death.' He continued sweeping until he'd covered every walkway in the general vicinity. When he put the broom back in the closet, he scrunched his nose and snorted. It seemed as if no one had swept since they'd settled here.

"Oh! Was it you who swept?" he heard a voice behind him and turned around to see Chizuru with a smile on her face.

"Ah yes. I'll be doing that a lot. This place hasn't been swept in a while has it?" Ryunosuke asked and Chizuru bowed her head in apology as if she were expecting him to rant on about how she should have swept before he had to.

"I'm sorry! If I'd known that no one else was sweeping, I would have!" she said almost frantically as she kept her head bowed. Ryunosuke sighed with a small, exasperated smile as he put his hands on his hips.

"I'm not angry. I'm fine with sweeping. Just let me know if you haven't done something and I'll do it. Don't worry about it so much." Ryunosuke said as he ruffled her hair and followed her out onto the

walkway.

"So...I heard from Okita-san that you were teaching Saitou-kun how to shoot your bow earlier." Chizuru started and Ryunosuke smiled. She sounded so innocent as she said these things and it just made him feel happy knowing her innocence hadn't been destroyed in same place his was.

"Well of course. Hajime-san taught me the basics of the sword a few years ago and I wouldn't be where I am if it weren't for him. I figured that since I never properly thanked him, I may as well repay him for going out of his way to help me. But I have to say, he's a natural with the yumi. His posture was almost perfect when he shot his first arrow." Ryunosuke said before his mood darkened. "Why did Okita know this?" he asked and Chizuru shook her head, looking slightly disturbed by the dark look.

"I don't know. I think he was passing by when he saw you with Saitou-kun." Chizuru said as they walked into the courtyard.

"Where are we going?" Ryunosuke asked, his earlier mood diminishing, leaving Chizuru giggling slightly.

"I'm taking you to Hijikata-san of course! He wants to talk to you about your uniform and the rules as well as your...agreement." Chizuru said as she led him to the room where Hijikata stayed. Chizuru knocked on the wood outside the door and sat down like she usually did. "We're coming in!" she called out before opening door. Hijikata looked up from whatever he was writing and turned around, gesturing to the pillow across from him.

"Please sit down, Ibuki. We have a lot to talk about. Thank you Chizuru." Hijikata said and Chizuru bowed before shutting the door and leaving.

"What is it you need to talk about Hijikata-san?" Ryunosuke asked. He wanted to get straight to the point.

"Sannan-san brought this to my attention earlier. You agreed to help us with experiments in exchange for your life, correct?" Hijikata asked, thinking Ryunosuke would immediately deny it. Ryunosuke nodded once as his blood ran cold. He was accepting death but he still felt the shock and nervousness involved in it.

"And I'm sure you remember the Rasetsu. Well, the reason you haven't seen Sannan-san walking around is because he's a survivor of drinking the potion. Of course, we told everyone that he died in order to not arouse suspicion but I was talking to him earlier and he wants to test a more docile version of the potion on you. The success rate is much higher than it used to be now that he's improved it and I agree with him. If this is successful, you'll be unstoppable. We're planning on doing it now if you say you will. You have to have the willpower for the potion to succeed and I need to know you're willing to overcome the bloodlust coming with it." Hijikata said, shocking Ryunosuke.

"I-I can't! What if it fails?! I might go around killing everyone!" Ryunosuke told Hijikata. He was turning into that cocky, inexperienced, but unconfident teenager he'd been when he was first dragged into the Shinsengumi.

"As your vice-commander, I'm going to order you to drink the potion. Don't worry. You'll be restrained until the effects subside and if it fails, you'll be slain on the spot. If it works, you'll be working among the higher ranks with the other captains, okay? I have a feeling it will succeed though. You may have a resolve to die, but you still have great willpower." Hijikata told Ryunosuke who stared at the man in shock. "Let's go. Sannan-san is waiting." Hijikata said as he got up, leading the still speechless Ryunosuke through the building. They stopped at a room where 'Sannan-san' was preparing the potion.

"Ah, Ibuki-kun. How nice to see you after all these years. I hear you agreed to be an experiment." he said as he capped the bottle to the potion.

"Well I didn't really have a choice in the matter even if I didn't agree." Ryunosuke said as he followed the two commanders to a room.

"When we have people drink the potion, there's usually about a 25 percent chance it will fail so we have to restrain their arms and legs. Now, when you drink it, it will be cold going down but when it's all down, it will start burning and you'll feel a surge. Repress the surge slightly but not all the way. Can you do that? You'll naturally not want to give in to the thing taking over but you have to wait until the devil in it comes out. That's when you repress it. Ready?" Sannan-san said as he took Ryunosuke's sword and set it off to the side and strapped Ryunosuke to the wall. Ryunosuke felt a sweat break out on his brow but he didn't allow himself to lose his composure.

"Ready as I'll ever be." Ryunosuke said with a smirk. These people were complete lunatics who were going to kill him. But he didn't resist. He didn't resist because he suddenly felt like he should drink it. Something was pulling him, urging him to drink it. Sannan-san held the potion to Ryunosuke's lips and tipped the glass so it all went down. Ryunosuke felt it go down and waited for the pain of it all.

It never came.

...

Author's Note: So yeah, this is a little late since I'm an All Pre-AP Freshman and they've been giving us some intense homework this first week plus the summer projects I didn't do. I should be able to even it out soon though. So anyways, back to the story! This took an odd turn. That's what I call 'the big plot bomb' considering it will either ruin the plot or it will make it better. I don't know which so that's what you guys have to decide. \_(By the way, this is only the first of many plot bombs. BE READY \_\_anything\_\_ can happen)\_ I came up with the idea when I was going through pictures of Ryunosuke. Can you imagine Ryunosuke as a Rasetsu? It's really wierd but I could and thought it would be great to at least try to put in. Poor Ryunosuke. His day just keeps getting worse and worse. Damn, all of this has just been day one. I'll pick up the pace in a few chapters. Thanks for reading! Please review! Thanks \_Kimagure 'Aya' Author\_ and \_alohamiems\_ for reviewing. I check my email constantly after I post a chapter just waiting for your reviews. XD

## 10. Chapter 10

**\*\*You Have to Be Willing to Understand\*\***

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### Chapter 10

He stood there, not noticing his hair turn white. Small, white horns protruded from his forehead and he just stood there, dumbstruck. He couldn't see the difference in his appearance and he barely felt different.

"What's wrong? Why doesn't it hurt? Nothing you said would happen happened. What-" he began when he shook his head, his hair blowing in front of his face. He stared in shock at the purely white hair that was in front of him.

"Do you feel any different? Are you okay? Are you in pain?" Sannan-san began but Ryunosuke shook his head, tugging slightly at the straps restraining him, only for them to tear like paper.

"What the-? What the hell's wrong with me?!" Ryunosuke almost shouted.

"None of the Rasetsu were this strong to be honest. See if you can transform back. We wouldn't want you to destroy something." Sannan-san began in a calm tone. "I must have messed up a calculation. The potion was exactly like what I gave myself and everyone else just slightly watered down. What could have done this?" Sannan-san began as he ran back to his lab and brought back the papers, shuffling through them and trying to figure out what happened.

"Um. I don't know how to transform back. How am I supposed to if I don't know how?" Ryunosuke asked as he looked at a mirror that was placed in the room so people could see what they looked like. Ryunosuke looked at it and touched the horns in his head gently. They were sensitive but felt as hard as stone. He noticed his eyes were still the yellowish color they'd always been but looked more vibrant, almost like they were glowing.

"Just imagine yourself back to normal strength and it should work, if not, I have a medicine that should neutralize the transformation." Sannan-san said, taking a deep, almost frustrated, breath at not finding the messed up calculation. Sure enough, Ryunosuke did as he was told but his eyes suddenly turned red.

"Ah! What the hell?! Did I do something wrong?!" Ryunosuke said in a slightly raised tone. He didn't like this. He liked his eyes the way they were. He transformed back into his Rasetsu state only for his eyes to go back to yellow. When he turned back into a human, his eyes went back to red.

"I-I don't know. None of this was in my calculations." Sannan-san said as he set his papers down. "Well as long as it doesn't make you

kill anyone or cause damage, it should be fine. We have a doctor here today so you'll have to take a physical examination. Just make sure you don't transform anywhere near outsiders or the soldiers of the Shinsengumi. It's still a well kept secret. We'll discuss the changes on a later date but for now, just keep the transformation hidden." Sannan-san said, sighing in defeat.

"I think that this power will become useful in the future. Especially with those 'Oni' showing up and trying to capture Chizuru-chan, we'll have better leverage." Hijikata said as he crossed his arms and smirked, observing Ryunosuke as if he were a prize.

"Oni? What are you talking about? Why are they after Chizuru-chan?" Ryunosuke asked. If someone was after Chizuru, he would protect her. No one would convince him otherwise.

"There is a group of people claiming Chizuru is an 'Oni' like themselves and trying to capture her. We have just barely been able to keep them from capturing her lately and now that you have this power, we should be able to stop them." Hijikata said quietly as he led Ryunosuke out of the room while Sannan-san went to his own room to figure out what the hell happened.

"Go to the main building. That's where they're doing examinations. I'd get your leg checked at in private. And before you get angry with Saitou, bear in mind that he reports to me for the greater good of the Shinsengumi and he just wants to make sure this...hindrance...doesn't kill you later on." Hijikata said as he directed Ryunosuke to the main building.

Ryunosuke saw that everyone had taken off their shirts for the exam and were waiting in line but he almost felt self conscious. Sure, he was just as strong and wasn't weak by any means but he was still rather on the lean side. His muscles weren't as hard packed and condensed as everyone else's not to mention he still had a scar from his own idiocy spread across his chest. It was embarrassing to even think about.

"Hey Ibuki-kun!" Heisuke's voice called out and Ryunosuke reluctantly walked over to the group. "Doc says we have to take our shirts off before it's our turn. Come on, Ibuki-kun! You're not shy, are you?" Heisuke said and poked Ryunosuke's stomach.

"I will. I will. Just shut up already." Ryunosuke snapped and slowly pulled his shirt off, leaving his scar for all to see as well as his less prominent muscles. You would think that in a place full of people with swords, they would have seen a scar of this size before. He blushed slightly at some of the stares he was getting until he felt a finger trace the scar.

"How did this happen?" Heisuke asked and Ryunosuke frowned but decided to go with the truth.

"I got into a fight with another rogue samurai just a few days after I got out of the river and he was about to rob me so I drew my sword against him while I was being my usual smartass self. He ended up getting this cut on me while he had the advantage and was standing over me, waiting for me to die of blood loss. That was when Tano-san showed up and beat the shit out of him, sending him running to the next city with his tail in between his legs." Ryunosuke explained and

Heisuke stepped back while Ryunosuke blushed slightly.

"Oh. I'm sorry I asked. It must bring up some bad memories." he said, bowing and apologizing.

"Don't worry about it. I don't remember the event itself. I forgot the pain after the fight." Ryunosuke told Heisuke, hoping to make him feel better and stop apologizing. The truth was, he remembered each life-threatening and embarrassing second of that day.

"Next!" the doctor shouted and Heisuke realized he was next.

"Sorry!" he said as he let the doctor poke and prod at him. He did as he was told and then it was Ryunosuke's turn.

"You're the new one aren't you?" the doctor asked as he traced the scar on Ryunosuke's chest. "Whoever bandaged this and took care of it did a very good job. Did they use any type of medicine?" the doctor asked as he did the regular check, still eyeing the scar.

"He used some type of leaf that burned at first contact but other than that, I have no idea. I was unconscious throughout most of the treatment." Ryunosuke told the doctor who nodded.

"That's good. The burning was the medicine killing the bacteria. Also, get some more sleep. You're sleep deprived. Next!" the doctor said and Ryunosuke got out of line before remembering what Hijikata said.

"Oh yeah. Hijikata-san said he wants you to look at a leg injury I got a few years ago after you're done with the checks." he told the doctor who nodded.

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Author's Note: Ha! I bet you didn't see that coming! So yeah, that's one of the plot bombs. Don't hate me for possibly ruining the story. I just didn't want Ryunosuke to only have a small part. He needs to be the main point of the story so he's going to have a bit of history and he's going to probably tear apart the Hakuouki timeline. Can't have Ainhoall predicting everything now can I? Hahaha! I'm joking. I'm just happy I finally feel like I made an unpredictable move for once in my life. (I'm usually a very predictable person and writer so I'm at least trying to change my writing so it's not TOO predictable.) Also, sorry if the chapter was either rushed or boring after the bomb but it's just a set-up for the next chapter.

Ainhoall- Lol. I got a few ideas after you started (Started. I couldn't let it go on) predicting my stuff so I thought, 'Well shit. I'm gonna have to step up my game.' I think I did a pretty good job, da? Although here's the thing, I thought that him turning into a Rasetsu would be too obvious. I figured that if the Water of Life just 'activated' his Oni side, it would be soooo much better...to me anyway...I hope this doesn't make my readers not like the story anymore. I usually stick to the plotline almost word-for-word so I'm really out of my comfort zone here. Thanks for reviewing. I check my email every day after I post a chapter, just waiting for your reviews. (w)

\_Kimagure 'Aya' Author- \_THERE IS A PICTURE?! I MUST FIND THIS!  
Hahaha! I'll be looking for that picture! Even if it means acquiring the artbook! Anyways, I have homework .time. I understand if your reviews are late. My updates are late every once in awhile! I admitted it! I usually check my email every day for at least three or four days after I post a chapter. And I get notifications on my phone so I ALWAYS know when someone reviews. I hope you keep reading. The plot's going to go a little off-course so sorry if it kinda gets out of control. I'm going to need you to tell me when it's too 'off.' ;) Thanks for reviewing! =u=

\_alohamiems- \_I'm guessing someone is having a mini fangirl attack? Hahaha! The best I can do is cyber-squeal with you. XD I hope you liked the 'plot bomb.' It took hours of debate before I finally made the decision. I was going to make him basically tear apart the Hakuouki timeline 'Oni-wise' while still following the events (if that makes any sense. o\_O) Anyways, I'm glad you reviewed. I like your reviews. I practically squeal every time I see how excited you are about an update. I hope you like my idea and stick around! =w=

\_RricheRownd- \_It's nice to hear from someone new! I went through all the Hakuouki fanfiction looking for one that continued Reimeiroku (I THOUGHT someone would have done it by now) but I found NOTHING so I just HAD to fix that. I'm glad you love it as much as I do. XD Thanks for reviewing! I hope you stick around and I don't ruin it too much... ^-^'

If anyone else feels like reviewing, I'd love to hear from you! I'll update when I can! I'm shuffling A LOT of homework right now but I found the time to write and post this chapter due to my teachers forgetting to assign homework for a few nights. I hope you like it (and aren't scared off by the plot bomb!) XD

## 11. Chapter 11

**\*\*You Have to Be Willing to Understand\*\***

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### Chapter 11

Of course, it took at least an hour for the checks to be over but Ryunosuke couldn't talk to the doctor just yet. They had to spend the whole day cleaning since Kondo declared it as 'A Cleaning Day.' Ryunosuke didn't have any problems with it and helped dust and sweep. After everyone finally finished, Ryunosuke noticed that the sun was about to set and he set off to find Hijikata since he didn't know where the doctor was currently at. Of course, luck was on his side for once and when he got to Hijikata's room, he knocked and walked in to find Hijikata and the doctor talking.

"Ah, we were just talking about you. I really would like to have a look at your leg. The way Saitou described it, it was in need of rehabilitation. Come on, sit. I want to at least look at the damage." the doctor said as Ryunosuke sat down next to the doctor, putting his

leg out and rolling his pants up to show the jagged scar.

"Matsumoto-sensei, should you really be doing this in here? Wouldn't you prefer a more open area?" Hijikata asked, a bit iffed at the fact that there was a medical examination going on right in the middle of his room.

"That's a good idea Hijikata-san. Do you have a room that's well lit at the moment where he can lie down?" Matsumoto asked. Hijikata nodded and Ryunosuke rolled his pants back down before following those two as Hijikata led them to a mostly unused part of the building. He opened a door to one of the rooms that still had sun leaking through the window and Matsumoto nodded. "Thank you Hijikata-san." he told Hijikata as they walked in. Ryunosuke was a little nervous since no one but Saitou and Tano-san actually knew how this injury affected him but he didn't say anything. Ryunosuke laid down where the doctor instructed and told Matsumoto how it happened and what it felt like when it got hit as well as how it was affected by temperature differences.

"Hm. It sounds like one of the nerves along the back of the leg was severed. Now we just need to figure out if it was the tibial nerve or the sural nerve. You said you could still feel your toes to a certain extent, right?" Matsumoto asked and Ryunosuke nodded.

"I can feel the temperature in my toes but I can't move them without an actual effort." Ryunosuke explained, laying with is chest to the ground as the doctor examined the scar. He poked and prodded at it and his eyebrows drew together in concentration.

"I think you severed the more important one. The tibial nerve. But you seem to be able to move your ankle to a certain extent. And as far as we know, nerves like these have a hard time growing back without surgery. Did anyone give you a surgery when you got this?" Matsumoto asked as he pressed down on the scar itself. Ryunosuke had already told him that he couldn't feel it unless he pushed hard enough.

"No. Tano-san only stitched the skin back together and helped me walk until it healed." Ryunosuke told the doctor.

"Hm. This is quite odd. You only have half of the effects of a severed tibial nerve yet it shows no sign of healing. Have you experienced any pain since it's healed? Any shooting pains focused on this area?" Matsumoto asked. He'd been examining the area with his hands the entire time, feeling the nerves and how one just seemed split in half with a small edge on the end of it from it trying to heal itself.

"Um...no. I don't believe I have besides the pain of thinking I could move my foot certain ways and not being able to. Phantom pains, was it?" Ryunosuke told the doctor. Matsumoto went to the top half of the scar where the small edge was and gently put pressure on it. Ryunosuke wasn't prepared for the overwhelming shot of pain that spread from his leg all the way up his body. He yelped in pain for a second, making Matsumoto drop his foot in surprise.

"Hm. How you've lived with this and not had pain like that every time you walked, I don't know. Something is-" the doctor began before



noticing Ryunosuke had transformed into a white-haired, yellow eyed, Rasetsu. Ryunosuke caught his breath and whimpered as the pain slowly ebbed away and sat up, not noticing his transformation. He puffed out his cheeks to help himself relaxed as he rubbed the pain away.

"What's wrong Matsumoto-sensei?" Ryunosuke asked as he saw the look of pure shock and slight fear cross the man's face.

"Y-You're a Rasetsu..." Matsumoto muttered.

"Oh...I transformed. Wait! How did you know about the Rasetsu?" Ryunosuke asked and Matsumoto sighed in relief, noticing Ibuki wasn't going to suddenly kill him.

"I...I think you should attend the meeting between Kondo, Chizuru, and I in a few minutes. That way I can explain to both you and Chizuru. This transformation could be the explanation for your halfway healed nerve since it was such an old injury." the doctor said as he watched Ryunosuke transform back into his normal self. 'But I didn't feel anything when I drank the potion. Not even an itch!' Ryunosuke thought as he decided to follow Matsumoto out of the room and to wherever they were meeting Kondou and Chizuru. When they arrived, Ryunosuke blushed slightly as Chizuru and Kondo focused on him.

"Why did you bring Ibuki-kun here?" Kondou asked Matsumoto as the doctor said next to him. Ryunosuke sat next to Chizuru, still confused as to why he was there.

"Does she know?" Matsumoto whispered to Kondou who nodded. "Okay. Well, I was performing an examination on a past injury from the day he was pushed off the bridge since Okita had thrown a pin at Ibuki's leg to immobilize him. This severed a nerve in Ibuki's leg which controlled his ankle and his sense of touch from the injury down to his toes." the doctor began, ignoring the looks Kondo and Chizuru were giving Ryunosuke.

"And as I was checking the state of the nerves, I hit a small edge on the end of the severed nerve, putting Ibuki in pain and...well. Ibuki, do you mind?" the doctor asked and Ryunosuke sighed before he transformed into his Rasetsu state. Chizuru gasped and slowly crawled away from him. She had been wondering why Ryunosuke's eyes were red and now she knew why.

"W-Why would Hijikata-san agree to do this?! What if it failed?!" Chizuru stuttered out and Ryunosuke sighed and crossed his arms.

"I guess he felt guilty for letting me live and wanted to make me pay for it. I agreed to do it but I still blame him for the differences between me and the regular Rasetsu. It was Sannan-san's calculations that most likely led to this." Ryunosuke explained.

"Well, it's certainly...different..." Chizuru muttered.

"I can't believe he did this without my consent." Kondou muttered and Ryunosuke transformed back to normal, his eyes going back to the red color they'd been before he transformed.

"Don't worry about it Kondou-san. I agreed to this so it's not like

he forced it on me. I'm surprisingly strong and so far, there hasn't been a down side. I'm not in pain or anything. You don't need to get mad at Hijikata-san. Besides, I had the option to live or be an experiment and do the Shinsengumi's dirty work. I was fine with that and now, here I am. Perfectly fine and taking care of an injury I should have dealt with years ago." Ryunosuke said with a smile. Kondou smiled back hesitantly but didn't object.

"Well I guess it's okay then. Hijikata did what he thought was best..." Kondou muttered as if trying to convince himself. Chizuru looked disturbed when Ryunosuke looked back at her.

"What's wrong Chizuru-chan?" Ryunosuke asked, directing Kondo and the doctor's attention to her.

"Why would father agree to carry out this kind of research?" she muttered.

"Father?" Ryunosuke questioned, confused.

"Koudou-san's opinions didn't count. He couldn't defy a shogunate order...but Koudou-san ended up leaving after all. I believe it's precisely because of his conscience that he made such a decision." Matsumoto told Chizuru as Ryunosuke's eyes widened.

"K-Koudou-san? Chizuru, Koudou-san is your father?" Ryunosuke asked in shock. They looked nothing like each other. Sure, the man had been nice but he had this creepy and secretive feeling around him every time Ryunosuke saw him. Chizuru nodded almost sadly and Ryunosuke felt bad for putting her in this position.

"Have some faith. Your father is a man worthy of respect." Matsumoto told Chizuru and Ryunosuke smiled, putting a hand on her back.

"Yeah Chizuru-chan. Have some faith. Your father was a really nice guy. I'm not really sure what's going on but have some confidence." Ryunosuke told her and she lifted her head with a small smile.

"Yes, of course." she told everyone.

"By the way doctor, I have something to show you." Kondou said as he got up. He looked troubled but was giving everyone a smile to not make them worry.

"Where do you want me to go doctor? Did you get enough information on the injury? Do you want me to do anything?" Ryunosuke asked as both he and Chizuru also got up.

"Yes. With certain therapy, the feeling won't come back but it will most certainly become usable. I would stand on that foot for long periods of time and try to move from there on just that foot. But with the Rasetsu's regenerative powers, it shouldn't be much of a problem any more." Matsumoto said with a smile. Ryunosuke sighed in relief.

"Thanks Matsumoto-san." Ibuki said with a small bow. So Saitou DID know what he was talking about...

...

Author's Note: Sorry it's soooo long and boring. I was going to end it while Ryunosuke was talking to Chizuru about her father but I decided that I'd go ahead and finish the conversation that way I can finally move on TO THE NEXT DAY! I've spend SEVEN chapters on ONE DAY! That's freakin ridiculous! I hope you enjoyed reading up until this point. Please review! I always answer!

...

\_Ainhoall- \_Haha! Yeah, I had a feeling Sannan wouldn't lose his cool or get angry so the only thing left was confusion and shuffling around like the mad scientist he is. And yes, Ibuki-kun is an Oni now. I'll explain some of the more complicated stuff in the next chapter. This chapter was kind of a boring filler and the next one should have a bunch of important information.

\_Kimagure Author- \_Yeah, our little Ibuki-kun's an Oni. But no, I haven't seen the SSL image. WHERE ARE YOU PEOPLE FINDING THESE THINGS?! I haven't seen it! Why haven't I seen it?! Where can I see it?! Hehe. Sorry. I guess I'm just not looking hard enough. Anyways, yes, Ibuki-kun looks adorable when he blushes. I'm glad you like the plot. It's going to be a little boring for the next chapter or two but things will start picking up again soon. I promise.  
^u^

\_alohamiems- \_Yes, you are indeed correct. Ibuki is, in fact, an Oni. (It's not like anyone else in the Shinsengumi knows though. They all think he's a different type of Rasetsu. ;) ) I'm glad you like the story. Sorry my updates are a little slow. It's just the fact that I'm playing Hakuoki of the Fleeting Blossom and I'm going back and making a few corrections to my plot notes and rewriting certain future scenes so I haven't really been focusing on these few boring chapters. But as I've been saying, it will get better.  
X)

\_RricheRownd- \_YOU FOUND IT?! Where can I find this picture? You can PM me with the link, right? Please feel free to do so if you can. XD ANYWAYS, I'm glad you like it. Sorry the updates are getting a little slow. I've been playing Hakuoki Demon of the Fleeting Blossom and I'm making corrections in future scenes that I've already written (not full chapters or I would be updating a lot more) and writing down plot bunnies so I haven't really been writing these next few boring chapters. Let's just call it 'writer's distraction.' But I'm still pushing through it so I can update within a month of the last update. I'm glad you like the story and are still reading. Like I said, if you can PM me a link or book or something, please do okay? Thanks for reading and reviewing! ^w^

\_Ecktay- \_My updates will usually be within a month of each other and if they're not, it's because of end of the year tests or something of the like. I'm only a freshman in high school so I'm not SUPER busy but I can be pretty busy at times. I make room for fanfiction of course so being busy is never really a problem. Thank you for reminding me to update! (Let's face it, I'm quite forgetful and I almost forgot X) ) I'm glad you like the story! I look forward to more reviews from you! ^-^

**\*\*You Have to Be Willing to Understand\*\***

Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki Reimeiroku, any of the Hakuouki series, or any of the characters or Ibuki would have had a part in Hakuouki.

## Chapter 12

The rest of the day was pretty much just going to dinner and going to sleep. Ryunosuke was out like a light due to the day's stressing events so the next day, when Chizuru realized he wasn't already up, she went to wake him up and couldn't help but let out a giggle. He'd managed to kick the blanket halfway off of his body and knocked the pillow across the room at some point. He was snoring lightly, ignoring the light coming in through the window and his hair had somehow gotten out of his usual bun and was everywhere. Chizuru knew he'd probably want to help with that day's chores so she walked over to his head and poked his cheek. All he did was roll over.

"Ibuki-kun...I'm going to make breakfast without you." she muttered in his ear and he was suddenly wide awake and frantically looking around the room for the voice. Chizuru giggled again, getting him to turn around and pout.

"You could have just kicked me or something." he grumbled as he straightened out his bed.

"How did this get over here?" he wondered out loud as he grabbed his pillow which had ended up past his feet and against the far wall. He set it down and made the bed as he talked to Chizuru. "You aren't going to make breakfast without me are you? Geez! How late did I sleep in?!" Ryunosuke asked as he looked himself over. "And I fell asleep with my clothes on!" he groaned, making Chizuru giggle again.

"It's okay Ibuki-kun. I was just about to start breakfast. I noticed you weren't up yet and came to wake you up." Chizuru said and Ryunosuke smiled.

"Thanks Chizuru-chan. Let's go." Ryunosuke said as he tied his hair back up, slid his sword into his belt, and straightened his clothes. He followed Chizuru to the kitchen where they made fried rice for breakfast since they were already late and needed to make something easy.

Ryunosuke gave everyone their portions before sitting down and eating his own in an almost rushed pace. He almost wished that they had made more. For some reason, he was extremely hungry. He waited until everyone had eaten and gone about to do their daily jobs before taking the dishes to the kitchen. When he got to the kitchen, he made himself a few rice balls to satisfy his hunger before picking up the bucket full of dirty dishes and carrying it in the direction of the well. He was about to round the corner when he heard voices and stopped.

"-didn't take that seriously just now, did you? Please don't tell anyone else about this lame joke, okay? I might have to kill you if you tell someone." a familiar voice rang out. Ibuki's eyes narrowed.

"Okita-san, you always act like that." Chizuru's voice sounded sad, like she'd witnessed a death of a family member.

"I suppose." Souji muttered as he got up.

"Okita-san. I'll keep your condition a secret. I promise you that I will not tell a soul." Chizuru told Souji, peaking Ryunosuke's interest.

"Thank you. Although, I don't know if Ibuki-kun will say the same. Get out here, dog." Souji said in that teasing tone he always used around Ryunosuke. Ryunosuke scowled at being found out along with the stupid nickname Souji liked to call him and walked around the corner.

"You could have picked a more discreet place to talk and then some of us wouldn't be tempted to listen." Ryunosuke growled out irritably. Souji just smirked.

"Well then I guess you heard that I have tuberculosis then?" Souji said slyly, knowing Ryunosuke hadn't heard that part.

"No, I didn't. But I'm guessing Chizuru-chan did." Ryunosuke muttered, not looking Souji in the eye. Souji had been a horrible person to Ryunosuke lately but he would never wish this kind of death upon him.

"Tch. Well the same thing goes for you, Ibuki-kun. Don't tell anyone or I'll have to kill you. Except with you, I'm serious." Souji said, his expression darkening dangerously. Ryunosuke sighed.

"Fine. I won't tell. Geez. I'll leave that for you to deal with." Ryunosuke told Souji before trying to walk past him with the bucket of dishes only to find a sword pressed against his throat.

"I'll be serious with you Ibuki-kun. If you tell someone, I WILL kill you and I'll think of it as a long overdue payment for not running you through with a sword the day I threw you off that bridge." Souji said with that same sadistic smile as he sheathed his sword.

"I won't tell a soul. Besides, I couldn't care less about this 'condition.' You're still the bastard that tried to kill me. It doesn't matter to me." Ryunosuke told him, making Chizuru just stand there and look between the two samurai.

"Tch. Typical Ibuki-kun. Only caring about himself and-" Souji began when Chizuru clenched her fists and interrupted.

"Will you two stop?! I can't stand it! You two never get along and even now, you can't stop arguing!" Chizuru said frantically and Ryunosuke chuckled.

"Okay Chizuru-chan. Just tell Okita-kun to let me go and I'll leave. I have nothing more to say to him anyway." Ryunosuke told her and Souji sighed.

"You can go Ibuki-kun. Although I expect to see you sitting by my death bed when the time comes so we can have a talk without wanting to kill each other." Souji told him in a serious but tired sounding

tone. 'How did he know that I still cared for him like a friend? Can he read minds or something?' Ryunosuke wondered before nodding and leaving to go wash the dishes, barely noticing that Chizuru had followed him and was now helping him. They finished and put all of the dishes back in the kitchen before heading to the pond that sat in the back of the mansion so they could clean up the area.

"Is what you said true?" she asked quietly as she swept the area.

"What part?" Ryunosuke asked.

"About not caring about his condition. Was it true?" she asked again and Ryunosuke sighed.

"No. Of course I care. I don't want to see someone who I used to consider one of my allies die in such a horrible way. Not even Souji deserves it." Ryunosuke told her as he used his broom sweep away some leaves that had fallen from the tree that hung above his head. They fell into a heavy silence before someone broke it.

"You're doing odd jobs for them? I didn't expect one with demon blood in her veins to do errands for humans." Ryunosuke immediately whipped around to look at the person standing on the rock in the middle of the pond. He pulled out his sword and stood in front of Chizuru, hoping to protect her.

"Who are you and why are you here?" he demanded.

"This is beyond ridiculous. I even find it sad. Don't get so worked up. I'm not here to fight today. But I wanted to know, are you related to Koudou?" the man asked Chizuru and Ryunosuke growled. Who the hell was this guy?! He'd completely ignored his question!

"Yukimura Koudou is my father." Chizuru told the man who slowly let a small smirk cross his lips.

"So that's it." the man muttered.

"What do you people want with father?" Chizuru asked.

"Chizuru, Koudou stands with us, do you understand? In other words, your father has turned his back on the Shogunate." the man told Chizuru, making her freeze.

"Hey! I asked you a question! Who are you?!" Ryunosuke demanded, shifting into his Rasetsu form, making the man look at him with wide eyes.

"I wish the humans would stop turning other humans into fake copies of demons especially considering they already have two Oni in their captivity. What is your name? I don't believe we've met." the man asked and Ryunosuke narrowed his eyes.

"Ryunosuke Ibuki. Now answer my question!" Ryunosuke demanded, getting more and more angry. The man chuckled then outright laughed for a minute.

"An Ibuki?! You've got to be kidding. You're among the weakest Oni

clan known to all demonkind and you think you have the right to challenge a Kazam, Chikage Kazama of all Oni, the strongest? Tch. I was worried over nothing. Although your sword does say you'd be worthy of killing. The leader of all Ibuki stands before me and probably doesn't even know his status. It's sad, pitiful really." 'Chikage' told Ryunosuke who grit his teeth. Was he really that weak compared to this guy? And what was this talk about being the leader?

"Fortunately for you, I have somewhere to be so I can't stay. Chizuru, you should seriously reconsider joining us since your father is on our side and an Oni rat is the strongest thing that can protect you. You won't last long among them." Kazama said before disappearing in thin air. That was when Hijikata, Heisuke, and Sano all ran into the yard to see Ryunosuke in Rasetsu form, clutching his sword so hard his knuckles were white as he glared daggers at where Kazama had been standing while holding back a snarl.

"What happened here?!" Hijikata demanded as he walked towards Chizuru, being careful not to startle the tense Rasetsu guarding her.

"Whoever that Kazama guy is, I'm going to rip him to shreds next time I see him unless he tells me what he meant." Ryunosuke growled as he stepped away from Chizuru and sheathed his sword, watching as everyone talked to her but didn't transform back to his human form.

"We heard the last part. Don't believe him Chizuru." Heisuke reassured the depressed girl.

"No one can be sure he was telling the truth." Sano added with a reassuring smile.

"We already have men out looking for Koudou-san. We should be getting reports soon." Hijikata joined in. Chizuru looked up from the ground and gave everyone a small smile.

"Yes. Okay." she muttered. Everyone turned to Ryunosuke who started investigating the hilt of his sword, not paying them any mind. He remembered the hell it was to look for it after he was thrown in the river despite the fact that it was actually so close to him. He was lucky it had been so close and didn't get stuck in the bottom of the river on the way down. It had been a family heirloom from his mother.

If what Kazama said was true, the sword must have been hundreds of years old and held in the hands of several demon leaders before him. If what Kazama said was true...If what Kazama said was true...was it? Could he trust that man who referred to Ryunosuke as an Oni? Ryunosuke scoffed. The weakest Oni clan, huh? He'd show that Kazama bastard. One day...

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Author's Note: Soooooo what do you think? I added an extra twist as if there wasn't enough going on. Sorry, updates might be a little slow from here on since the holidays are going by. They should pick up around the end of February or beginning of March to about a bi-weekly basis. Thanks for reading! Please review and have a Happy Holidays!

(For the ones that haven't already gone past.)

...

\_alohamiems\_- Thanks for reviewing! Yeah, we're kind of getting to the boring explanations so hang in there!

\_Kimagure Author\_- I'll find it eventually. But yeah, I'm a freshman. You're a sophomore then? That's cool!

### 13. Chapter 13

**\*\*You Have to Be Willing to Understand\*\***

Note: It was brought to my attention that Ibuki and Ryunosuke are supposed to be switched around regarding surname and given name so I went back and changed it in ALL of the chapters. I did the same for Kazama too since I also messed that up. Thank you so much Kimagure Aya for pointing that out.

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#### Chapter 13

"Are you okay Ibuki-kun?" A voice broke him out of his thoughts and his eyes shot in the direction of the voice, narrowed and angry.

"Fine Heisuke. Never better..." Ryunosuke muttered as he forced himself to calm down and transform back. He stormed off in the direction of the main gate, faintly hearing Chizuru explain to everyone about how Kazama had said Ryunosuke was an Oni. Ryunosuke clenched his hands into fists as he walked out of the Shinsengumi's grounds and walked into town. He had a place in mind that he wanted to visit since he knew it would be a peaceful setting that wouldn't leave him lonely.

He'd heard from the guys about a teahouse in Shimabara called Sumiya and he had a bit of extra money from the paycheck he started getting from being in the Shinsengumi's services. He'd found the paycheck outside his door that morning as he was leaving with Chizuru. As he walked into the building, he immediately felt past memories come back to him and sighed.

He felt pathetic for coming to one of these places but he didn't want to talk to someone he knew especially if it was about his life issues. He'd rather talk to someone he'd probably never see again and just leave afterwards, letting them think he was crazy than have someone dangle it over his head for the rest of his life. He walked to a room that no one was in and sat down, watching quietly as the geisha slid open the door and bowed.

"Good evening. You are most welcome here. I'm Kimigiku and I'll be serving you this evening. Please enjoy yourself." she told Ryunosuke who nodded.

"Can you just bring sake? I only came for company." Ryunosuke said



honestly, smiling slightly to cover his mood and not noticing it turn back into a frown. He didn't want to take it out on a poor geisha girl.

"Right away. Are you sure you don't want anything else? Some food may help soothe your worries. A frown doesn't fit such a young face." she told Ryunosuke and he realized he was frowning again.

"I'll take whatever you recommend then. Thank you." he told her, smiling sadly. How could she see through him so easily? She came back with sake and a plate of soba as she sat next to him. "Thank you." Ryunosuke said as he downed a cup of sake. He stared at his food for a second before looking at Kimigiku and giving her an apologetic smile. "I'm sorry. I didn't introduce myself. I'm Ibuki Ryunosuke. Nice to meet you." Ryunosuke told her as he bowed his head ever so slightly.

"Ibuki? I haven't heard that name in awhile." she muttered to herself, probably thinking he wouldn't hear her. Ryunosuke watched her from the corner of his eye as he ate and she simply kept his cup full of sake. There went his chances of getting someone who didn't matter to listen to his problems. She just seemed odd. Different. And what was the significance of the name 'Ibuki' to her? Ryunosuke finished and took another shot of sake, feeling himself start loosening up and voicing his thoughts.

"Tch. Damn Kazama. It's all his fault I'm here." he muttered and Kimigiku's gaze quickly shot back to him. "And what about you? You seem to think the name 'Ibuki' is special. Why?" Ryunosuke asked as he took another shot. He wasn't drunk. No. Far from it. He was just trying to get answers from her. He was tired of how discreet these people were being and the alcohol was going to take him eventually. Her face suddenly got serious, no longer holding that 'willing to please' look.

"I am a demon myself, Young Prince. Or should I say, Young Leader. Every Oni knows The Ibuki's are known for their betrayal to the Oni name and their cunning assassination skills. They were also known as the widest spread Oni bloodline. Not because there were a lot to begin with, but the fact that they bred with humans and diluted the bloodline. But to see their leader with a strong resemblance to the typical Ibuki traits...I would say you are at least fifty percent pure Ibuki." she told him with a straight face. Ryunosuke stared at her for a second before rubbing the hilt of his sword. "That sword was first forged back with the first Ibuki turned sixteen and took reign over the new bloodline created from the Kazama line. You are distant cousins with Chikage." she explained further, leaving him to stare at her silently.

"Why are you telling me this?" Ryunosuke asked as he set his cup down.

"Because, as the pack leader of the Ibuki line, you deserve to know since it seems you haven't been educated. You need to know how the other Oni will feel about you and why they will always look down on you." she told him, looking him dead in the eye.

"Then tell me what you know. I've known nothing up until this afternoon when Kazama paid a visit and told me I was an 'Oni.' I'd like to know what I'm getting into." Ryunosuke said hesitantly,

picking his cup back up and taking another shot.

"Very well. I guess I'll start from the beginning. The Ibuki bloodline is a cross between the Kazama line and an unknown Oni line. The Kazama line is a very dangerous line meant for destruction while the unknown line was more of a stealthy breed meant for thievery and other small tasks requiring rats to sneak things around. The unknown line used to be the weakest line but then went extinct and the Ibuki's took their place. They wanted a line that was strong but stealthy. The unknown line wasn't strong while the Kazama's weren't stealthy." she began.

Ibuki listened to the history lesson, wondering just how she knew all of this. Was the Ibuki line really such a big deal? How many Oni lines were there if there were so many distinctive ones? Was there a community of Oni living among humans? These questions went through Ryunosuke's head as he listened. "However, the genes of the Kazama line and the genes of the unknown line contradicted each other and it lead to several genetic defects in the beginning. After a century of trying, they gave up and the Ibuki's continued as an assassination line with several power defects. For instance, you've noticed that there are two forms to the Oni species, correct?" she asked and Ryunosuke nodded. This was getting interesting.

"In every other Oni line, transforming gives us a major increase in power. For the Ibuki's, it's different. The Ibuki's became assassins and in doing so, they adapted. The white hair and yellow eyes were too noticable so they stopped using their transformations and grew powerful in their casual forms as they began using their powers to greater extents without transforming. While this was happening, they unknowingly began adapting to assassination and stealth. This pretty much leaves just a slightly stronger version of the original unknown bloodline. Most of the Ibuki blood is diluted and the people who have it have no idea they have it and most likely never will unless they have over fifty percent of the Ibuki and/or another line of demon's blood or are seventy percent full Ibuki." she said before stopped talking, allowing Ryunosuke to take all of this in. He thought about it for only a second before he raised an eyebrow and narrowed his eyes.

"Is this in the average Oni textbooks or something? You sound like you're reciting something from a legend or history book. Where did you learn about all of this?" he asked and she smiled.

"I am a very old Oni. I've met several of your ancestors and I've collected information on the line so my Princess would have the necessary information to record. I also met the Queen of the Ibuki's about twenty years ago when she needed to be told who she was as well. The Ibuki line just seems to be horrible at telling their children what signifigance they are. Now that I think about it, it could have been your mother." This got Ryunosuke's attention.

"Really? Did she mention anything about my father? I knew him but was he...an Oni?" he asked. Kimigiku sighed.

"Yes. I believe she mentioned a man who was slight Ibuki...or he was full human and just lying about it. She loved him but didn't want to ruin the Ibuki line with a simple lie from him. She was already tainted and she didn't want her descendants to be so weak that they

couldn't invoke their true Oni form." she told Ryunosuke. She looked him in the eyes and sat up straight.

"She was tainted with Kazama blood. Human blood would dilute the Ibuki blood even further and make her descendants have to bow down to the Kazama's since the Kazama blood is pure and strong and doesn't dilute easily. Ryunosuke, if she did have you with a human, Kazama is your superior. You're not with her so my guess is that she died of an unknown illness, correct?" she asked and Ryunosuke nodded. "It wasn't an unknown illness. The Kazama DNA was tearing apart the Ibuki DNA and she was falling apart from the inside. Depending on who your father is, the same thing could happen to you." she said and Ryunosuke felt his eyes widen before he looked down at his upturned palms. "And if my father WAS a human and not the guy she mentioned? How long would I have left to live?" he muttered.

"At the most, you wouldn't last until the end of next year. However, if your father was any human that had at least a slight bit of Ibuki in him, you could be immortalized like all of the other Oni. It's all in who your father was. I wouldn't worry about it though. You aren't as weak as you would be if your father was human. From the looks of it, you've already invoked the transformation before and you can only do it if both your parents were Ibuki's and your blood is at least fifty percent Ibuki. Now back to more recent matters. Why was it you were talking to Kazama this evening?" she asked. Ryunosuke could tell she was just trying to get his mind off of his possible impending doom.

"He was after Chizuru Yukimura, one of my friends in the Shinsengumi. I didn't know who he was but I knew that I had to defend her and I invoked the transformation on accident. He asked for my name and then started mocking the Ibuki's and how it was just absolutely hilarious that I had no idea what was going on." Ryunosuke explained before looking Kimigiku in the eyes. "I thought I was just a different version of a Rasetsu. I drank the formula and it invoked the transformation and, unlike the others, it wasn't painful. I knew something was wrong but I had no idea I was a real demon and not one of those creations. Now that I know, what should I do? Should I be somewhere taking care of business?" he asked and Kimigiku smiled slightly.

"I think your best place to be at the moment is guarding Chizuru. The other Oni are after her and the Yukimura line is more of a delicate line and she won't be able to defend herself." she said and Ryunosuke smiled at her.

"Thank you...for everything. I have to go now. I have somewhere to be." he told her and handed her the money for the food and sake. She just shook her head and gave it back to him.

"I don't need it. But for someone who needs to live among humans to survive, you'll need it. We may meet again someday. Hopefully we won't be in such pitiful positions when we do." she told him before taking his dishes and leaving. He sighed and left the tea house, feeling as if he were new to a world that had just opened up to new possibilities. He wanted to know what else was out there. He was looking at the world in a new light now.

"Now what...?" he muttered to himself as he walked back onto the Shinsengumi grounds. He wasn't late by any means but Hijikata was

still standing there, scowling. "What's wrong Hijikata-san?" Ryunosuke asked as he stood face to face with Hijikata.

"Perhaps I didn't make myself clear. You're still a prisoner here and therefore cannot travel alone. You had no authority to leave the grounds like that, much less than go off to a tea house and waste all your money getting drunk." he growled and Ryunosuke looked down at the ground.

"No, you didn't make yourself clear. I wasn't aware of this 'rule' that you'd put in place. It won't happen again. As for the tea house, I was only there for company. And getting drunk was the last thing I wanted to do while I was out. It's still broad daylight and there's chores to be done and I don't want to fall over while I'm sweeping." Ryunosuke told Hijikata who was still scowling.

"This had better not happen again." he growled before leaving. Ryunosuke sighed and went over to the broomcloset to sweep all of the walkways yet again. He had a lot he needed to think about.

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Author's Note: Sorry for the history lesson but it had to be done. As you can probably tell, I switched Ryunosuke's name to the proper way it should be read in ALL of the chapters! That was A LOT of work but I'm glad I did it. I tend to try to keep my facts straight when it comes to fanfiction and when I found out about the names, I practically had a meltdown and went back to fix it all immediately before my next update. Well, anyways, here is your Christmas present from me! A filler chapter update! Woo~! Happy Holidays and please review, favorite, and follow!

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\_Ainhoall- \_Glad you like the twist. I'll probably be posting on a monthly basis but I figured that I was due for an update and it was the Holiday season so I may as well. Happy Holidays! :)

\_lizziecats- \_Yay! New person! Okay, I'm glad you agree with me on the whole Souji not dying thing. At first, I wasn't going to act on my thoughts and figured I wouldn't be able to figure out a way but now that I know that you don't want him to die either, I'm all for it! Souji shall be cured...at some point. I still have to figure out how. Also, thank you for all the ideas about how Ryunosuke isn't invincible. To be honest, I wasn't thinking about that before now and I probably would have gone along that track anyway but now that you've brought it to my attention, I think that something like that would help the plotline in more ways than one. And believe it or not, Souji is my favorite character in Hakuouki. Yeah, he's being horrible in the beginning but that's just for the plot. Ryunosuke and Souji are going to probably become best friends at some point. Like a love-hate friendship, you know? I'm soooo happy you like this. Sorry if this chapter was more of a filler but I just couldn't figure out a way to blend his heritage and history into the plotline. Anyways, thank you sooooo much for reviewing! I hope I hear more from you in many updates to come! Happy Holidays! XD

\_ScarletBloomSword- \_Thank you. I came up with idea the day after I

finished Hakuouki considering Ryunosuke was one of my favorite characters in Hakuouki Reimeiroku and it tore me apart that I wouldn't see Ryunosuke again. I'm glad you like it! I hope I'll hear from you again! Thank you for reviewing and Happy Holidays!  
X)

\_Kimagure 'Fukuhara Aya' Author-\_ I'm really glad that you told me about that little hiccup. It was a mistake I made when I was rushing into this. I usually tend to do a lot of research regarding names but I was in a rush when it came to those two. As you can see, I went back and changed the names from the beginning of the story and it was a pain in the butt but I'd rather it be right than parade around with the wrong facts. So, thank you very much for informing me of that. I actually went back and checked, just to make sure you were right. And sure enough, Google did not fail me and you were correct. I completely understand when your internet is slow or is down for a few days. Mine is the same way. Also, just for future reference, a sophomore is a person in their second year of high school. I know that English is not your first language considering your profile is in Malay. (I check most of my reviewer's profiles when I become particularly attached to them and consider them my friend. This way, I get to know them better. ;) ) I understand when you have small mistakes so don't be afraid to make mistakes at times. I look forward to all reviews, good and bad, so don't ever hold back from letting me know that I've made a mistake. Thank you for reviewing and Happy Holidays!

## 14. Chapter 14

**\*\*You Have to Be Willing to Understand\*\***

Disclaimer: I do not own Hakuouki Reimeiroku, any of the Hakuouki series, or any of the characters or Ibuki would have had a part in Hakuouki.

### Chapter 14

Ryunosuke swept all the walkways and wiped the sweat from his brow. He'd thought about it and he wanted to take necessary action. Even if he was one of the weakest Oni in existence, he was still going to defend Chizuru down to his last breath. He needed something to live for and that was as good a reason as any. Fellow Oni had to stick together, right? And if he wasn't going to defend her, what Oni would? She was supposedly part of a noble line and he was nothing more than a street rat so it was only fitting. The sun was setting as he put the broom up and started walking to his room. He heard voices and calmly walked by, not changing his rather slow pace as he rounded the corner that room took up.

"...Rasetsu Squad. To improve our forces's fighting capabilities, please make use of us. I'd like Ibuki-san to join-" Ryunosuke heard Sannan-san's voice before an almost frantic

"No!" was heard. Ryunosuke kept walking, slowly quieting his steps before carefully returning.

"I mean, what you're asking for is a completely separate team. You can have that team if you want but Ibuki-kun stays with us. He's part of the Shinsengumi by agreement and he owes us his life, not you."

Kondou-san's voice rang out and Ryunosuke felt his eyes widen but he didn't make a sound before walking away. This wasn't a conversation for his ears.

As he went to his room, changed, and fell asleep, he couldn't get the conversation he'd just heard out of his ears. It had only been two days and his life was already being changed. He felt like he was being swept up into the tide, never to return to shore again as he slipped off into the world of dreams.

-About two weeks later-

"Hey Ibuki-kun! You want to go out to drink with us?" Sano's calm voice through the door of his room interrupted Ryunosuke's concentration. He'd been meditating in his room after each patrol round (his rounds were mostly around lunch time with Saitou) and it was already getting him nowhere after two weeks of meditating. Now thoroughly irritated, Ryunosuke yanked open the door and glared at the tall samurai. They'd gotten back on friendly terms and became even better friends to the point that they'd wrestle every once in awhile, trusting the other not to kill them. Ryunosuke wiped his sweaty bangs off of his face. It was summer and this was probably the seventh time either Sano or one of the others had asked him to go out for a drink during these two weeks. Even Saitou had asked!

He'd declined most of the time since he'd been focusing on trying to get more powerful. He felt like he wasn't strong enough to defend Chizuru if the time came for it especially with a demon as powerful as Kazama breathing down his neck. And so, after a lot of physical labor that didn't do anything to help him, he'd resorted to old fashioned meditating since he was so stressed he couldn't handle the yumi correctly without pulling a muscle or almost snapping the bow itself. This meditation took hours out of his day and he easily lost track of time. Saitou had to bring his lunch most days and Chizuru often stopped by to see if he was alright. It was even cutting into his sleep, leaving him exhausted some days. He never had bags under his eyes though. The Rasetsu were supposedly more active at night so that could've been why.

Ryunosuke sighed and calmed himself. Chizuru had been worried about him since he'd holed himself up. He may as well get out more often. He was going to find the answer to the meaning of life before he found the answer to his problems at this rate.

"Sure." he muttered and Sano put a hand on the shorter samurai's shoulder.

"Let's go Ibuki-kun. Saitou and Shinpachi are waiting at the gate." Sano said with a reassuring smile as he dragged Ibuki out of his room. Ryunosuke had just enough time to grab his sword before he had to slam the door shut behind him. They met Saitou and Shinpachi at the gate and they both looked at Ryunosuke in surprise like they hadn't actually expected him to come. Saitou smiled slightly while Shinpachi shrugged it off and they continued walking to town. They found a small tea house and immediately hit the booze. Before Ryunosuke knew it, he was surrounded by two drunk idiots talking about their life's problems with the exception of Saitou.

"Damn! Lately Hijikata-san nags even more than he used to. The moment we step out, he's asking 'Where are you going?' and 'What

for?'...right? Shouldn't he be questioning Itou-san and the others the same way? What pisses me off the most is how he doesn't bother them about anything." Shinpachi began. Ryunosuke just sipped at his sake, ignoring Shinpachi's little rant despite him having a run-in with this particular problem just a few weeks earlier. Ryunosuke felt almost depressed as he wasted time sitting around with these Oni out on the loose and leaving Chizuru unprotected. Then again, now that he thought about it, he'd pretty much left her unprotected these past two weeks with how he kept himself secluded from everyone.

He sighed and set his cup down, putting his elbows on the table and rubbing his temples. There had to be a way. These Oni were said to vanish into air before someone's very eyes and have infinite strength. He only had the strength which he found out actually is almost limitless. If he punched hard enough, he could probably shatter that Kazama's face. That was another thing. He had this unusual taste for violence. It was irritating because he'd always imagine slaughtering everyone in the general vicinity and he'd have to fight himself so he wouldn't give in to the urges. He sighed. At least he knew how to control the transformation completely. It was hard not to turn into his Oni form when he got frustrated or angry.

"And you! Ever since you've become a Rasetsu, you've been hiding out in your room, leaving Chizuru-chan worried about you! You've been like a big brother to her and you've left her to fend for herself for these past few weeks! None of us care if you're a Rasetsu, okay?! Just get over it already! You're strong, we get it! We all need time to ourselves! But you have to be there when we need you!" Shinpachi was suddenly standing with his hands on the table as he got in Ryunosuke's face, expecting some sort of response. Ryunosuke scowled. That idiot had no idea what he was going through.

"The reason I've been conditioning my mind is so I don't go on a rampage and kill all of you in the middle of the night. I never wanted to do it but lately, I've had the imagination of a psychotic serial killer and if you really think it's easy to control it, you're wrong. It's agonizing. I'm trying to control myself so I DON'T hurt Chizuru! I don't think I've clarified it enough. I'm here to protect Chizuru and killing all of you won't exactly help now will it? I can leave whenever I want but I don't! I have a purpose in life now and it's to protect that girl!" 'I need to protect one of the only people like me that's left! If I don't, who will besides the humans in the Shinsengumi?!' Ryunosuke's rant left everyone in the tea house staring at him while he pondered over the unspoken ending of it. Humans? Was that what he thought of them now? He composed himself with a small, flustered blush before throwing some coins on the table for the drinks he'd already had, standing up, and walking out the door. He bumped shoulders with a girl who'd been standing in the doorway on his way out.

"Sorry." he muttered before he felt someone grab his arm, holding him just outside the doorway.

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Author's Note: Sorry it's so late. Author's block. And semester exams are next week. Um...alrighty then. Thanks for reading. Please review.

\_Author's Note #2: This is a revised version of the chapter. It was unrevised when I last posted it so it should be at least a little better than before.\_

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\_Kimagure 'Fukuhara Aya' Author-\_ Oops. Sorry. I rely on google for the language stuff. Thanks for being my only reviewer this last chapter. There's going to be a cute Chizuru and Ibuki scene in maybe the next chapter or the next one. Thanks for reading and please just bear with me with all these filler chapters.

## 15. Chapter 15

**\*\*You Have to Be Willing to Understand\*\***

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### Chapter 15

"We came here to calm down, kick back, and relax. You know he's drunk. He can't help it. Please...just don't go back into that room. We invited you since Chizuru was so worried about you and wanted to make sure you were okay. Come on. Come back inside and relax a little." Sano's calm voice filled his ears and he gave a sigh of defeat. He yanked his arm from Sano's grip, bringing the taller man stumbling past him from the power that pulled him forward. Ryunosuke rubbed his temples in frustration before walking back inside and sitting down, ignoring Shinpachi's antics with a small pout like the immature teenager he liked to believe he still was. He heard giggling and saw the girl he'd bumped into earlier in his rush out the door.

"Thank you very much for your help the other day." she said with a smile as she walked inside and bowed to Saitou.

"Hey Saitou, is she an acquaintance of yours?" Shinpachi asked.

"We're hardly even acquainted." Saitou muttered.

"A few days ago, he came to my rescue on the street across from here." she explained.

"Oh?" Shinpachi said with a smug look, wanting more details from Saitou himself.

"Or more accurately, it was Chizuru-chan." she clarified and Ibuki's gaze was immediately directed towards her. How did Chizuru know her? "Is Chizuru-chan well?" she asked and everyone seemed to get varying looks of worry and concern.

"Chizuru-chan..." Sano muttered as if not knowing how to say something important. Shinpachi seemed to sober up slightly as he glared at Ibuki.

"To be honest, Chizuru's been somewhat down recently because of this



idiot." he began. Ryunosuke growled.

"I didn't do anything! Blame it on the bastard who told her that her father is on the enemy side!" Ryunosuke defended.

"Well maybe if you would actually come out of your room and be there for her, she would be cheered up by now! It's time you step in and be the big brother you've been pretending to be since you've come back! Chizuru's done nothing but worry about you since the incident! It's time you thanked her!" Shinpachi snapped. 'I've hardly even talked to her. A big brother? Did I really act like that when I was with her? And now I know that she's an oni...like me.' Ryunosuke thought after hearing Shinpachi's words.

"Like a big brother to Chizuru-chan? He doesn't seem like he'd be nice to an innocent girl like her. He probably just thinks of her as someone who's constantly in the way." the girl said and Ryunosuke scowled. The girl had reddish eyes and seemed to have an aura of power despite her looks. Another Oni? Even if she was, she had no right to say things like that.

"And who are you anyway?" Ryunosuke asked through gritted teeth. She raised an eyebrow and smiled kindly.

"Isn't it more polite to introduce yourself before demanding others to introduce themselves?" she asked with only a faint smug tone.

"Ibuki Ryunosuke," Ryunosuke growled. It had the desired effect. The girl's eyes widened a fraction in slight surprise and he took a sip out of the cup placed in front of him as she nodded in apology.

"Well Ryunosuke-san, I am Sen. Kimigiku is my assistant so she informed me of your...situation." Sen said with a sympathetic smile. 'That I could die either any day soon or live to be a thousand? Yeah, quite the situation.' he thought to himself.

"Do you know her. Ibuki-kun?" Sano asked and Ryunosuke shook his head.

"No. I know Kimigiku though. Why are you so apologetic all of a sudden anyway?" Ryunosuke asked with narrowed eyes.

"Because I understand why you're acting the way you do. It's only natural for someone as young as you are compared to us." she told Ibuki who's eyes fell to the cup in front of him.

"Of course..." Ryunosuke muttered. He had forgotten that he was currently one of the youngest demons among all of the clans. He had a huge disadvantage of age and experience among all the other demons.

"Well, we have to head back to the headquarters. It was nice to meet you Sen. Why don't I ask Chizuru if she wants to spend some time with you later today? You might be able to cheer her up." Harada told Sen who nodded enthusiastically.

"Thank you so much! I'd love to. Meet me at this spot if you can, okay?" Sen told them before leaving. Harada looked at Ryunosuke for

an explanation of their earlier conversation about his age but only got a scowling face. He sighed and decided to leave Ryunosuke alone.

The rest of the day was rather uneventful up until the point when Sano came back from his rounds. Ryunosuke was currently sweeping the sidewalk with Chizuru for the first time in weeks when Sano told her that Sen would like to talk with her.

"Ibuki-kun, will you come with me?" Chizuru asked and Ryunosuke looked surprised.

"Um, yes, of course. If that's what you want. But who will clean?" Ryunosuke asked and Sano smiled.

"Don't worry about it! I'm sure we'll trick Heisuke into it or something! You know how we are about bets! One of the consequences can be cleaning while you guys are out. Just go and have fun." Sano said with a wink. Chizuru laughed and Ryunosuke just sighed, exasperated.

"Thank you, Sano-san!" Chizuru said with a smile and a bow.

"Make sure someone...competent ends up cleaning. I don't want to have to deal with a bunch of broken dishes when I get home." Ryunosuke growled and Sano laughed, noticing how Ryunosuke called this place 'home' but didn't say anything.

"Of course Ibuki-kun. But that would mean over half the Shinsengumi doesn't qualify." Sano said jokingly. Ryunosuke sighed again.

"Then trick the other half." he said with a smirk as he led Chizuru out of the compound. They walked down to the ramen shop from earlier to see Sen waving enthusiastically. Ryunosuke didn't dismiss the smirk he saw on her face when she saw him.

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Author's Note: Ummm. I kinda forgot about fanfiction for a while there. Sorry about that and for ditching you guys with a filler. But we're halfway through summer! Yay! Be happy! Get off the internet and enjoy the sun! Don't murder me for being so late with my updates! Have a great summer everyone cause I'll probably be late again!

...

Noirink- Thanks for the review. I responded with a private message. But again, thanks for pointing these things out. Fanfiction and writing isn't really a big part of my life anymore so I haven't been practicing in a while and I'm making the rookie mistake of screwing up characters and just general communication and understanding.

Kimagure 'Fukuhara Aya' Author- Sorry this chapter was so late. Thanks for reviewing. I'm glad you look forward to my updates! (Even if they are getting really late. T-T)

WinterKnightWolf- Thanks for reviewing. I looked it up when I started and was completely dumbfounded that no one had this idea! I

took the chance and started this with soooo many ideas in my head but I'm taking time to sketch out the plot at the moment so it's taking forever. I'm sorry if it ruins your expectations. (First thing I was worried about when I started this project. T-T)

HoneyCaramelSwirl- Your username makes me hungry for sweets. Anyways, thanks for reviewing. I'm so glad you like this fanfic and it's twists. One of my biggest fears when taking this on was that it wouldn't be up to some people's expectations or if it was way too farfetched. Thank you so much for reviewing! It means so much to me!

## 16. Apology and Plan to Continue

### Just a Note

Hey guys, so I realize that it's been an entire year and a half since I last updated. I'm planning on continuing this story soon since my life has kind of evened out a little and I can focus a bit more. I've improved on my writing and I believe I could possibly revise the story to help it flow better as I get closer to finishing if I put my mind to it. However, I don't want to put forth the effort and time if there isn't anyone interested in reading it. If you're an original reader/reviewer of this story and you're still interested, let me know. If you're new and you want me to continue, let me know. Review, PM, something. I'll be checking the traffic on this story as well for the next month.

The next chapter is currently being written (with difficulty considering the writer's block that comes with it is particularly nasty) and I'll have it posted soon if I can get it written. I apologize for such a long wait but please know that I'm not done with this fanfiction. I realize a lot of you have probably lost interest in reading it, but I'm going to try to stay active. College has been difficult but I'm finding myself with more downtime than what I had in high school.

You'll notice that my writing style is very different than it used to be. Longer, more descriptive, not so straight to the point. This story is about to be completely different style wise so, if you're going to continue reading it, prepare yourself for the change.

If you're still here and willing to read this, thank you. I reread all of the reviews and my own responses to those reviews over the past few hours and I feel like I've let you all down by not updating. I remember typing those responses and getting to know my favorite reviewers. I'm hoping you are willing to continue reading as I bring this story back to life.

Expect the next update within the next month or so. Several inconsistencies in the original pre-written plot require fixing and the next chapter needs to be written from scratch to my standards. This story has been skating by on idea alone and it's about time some better writing got added in the mix.

End  
file.